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TRANSLATION

OF

THE LETTERS

OF A

HINDOO RAJAH;

WRITTEN

PREVIOUS TO, AND DURING THE PERIOD OF HIS RESIDENCE IN ENGLAND.

To which is prefixed a

PRELIMINARY DISSERTATION

ON THE

HISTORY, RELIGION, AND MANNERS,

OF

THE HINDOOS.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

BY ELIZA HAMILTON.

VOLUME II.

BOSTON:
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LETTERS

OF

A HINDOO RAJAH.

LETTER XI.

From the Rajah Zāārmilla, *to* Māāndāāra.

PRAISE to Varuna! under the guidance of whose potent arm, behold thy friend surrounded by the billows of the mighty ocean.

The most sublime objects alone present themselves to my view. *Above* is the azure canopy of Heaven, in which 'the gold-crowned Sultan of the firmament advances the standard of his brightness;' and without rival or competitor, enjoys the solitary gran-

deur of imperial state. *Below* is the boundless expanse of waters, the congregated waves of which, like the chiefs of some great republick, alternately rise into the majesty of power, and retire into the peace of obscurity.

From the benevolence and friendship of Captain Grey, I received every assistance in preparing for my voyage, and procured every necessary that could tend to its comfort. I have also from him Letters of introduction to his friends, with a sketch of the character of each, so that I shall have the advantage of a sort of pre-acquaintance in a land of strangers. From Morton, I have received letters for his mother and sisters, accompanied by some valuable presents, which the generous hand of Grey enabled him to procure for them.

This young man has made a rapid progress in my esteem: his mind seems formed for the residence of virtues; nor is there any reason to apprehend that the head-strong

passions of youth will ever be able to drive her from her seat.

I have not forgotten the sister of my friend, the long lamented Percy. For her I have made a selection of whatever I thought could be acceptable: and the idea of presenting it in person affords great delight to my mind.—Jeo-doss, to whom, as well as to my other servants, I gave the liberty of returning to Kuttaher, so earnestly entreated for leave to accompany me, that I consented; and also at their own desire have kept two more of my own people, all of whose services I find very useful to me in this floating castle; where, in spite of every precaution, I confess many things occur disgusting to delicacy and abhorrent to the nice feelings of propriety.

I was accompanied to the ship by Grey, Morton, and some other friends, who have distinguished themselves by their particular kindness to me. Even Cooper, wild and eccentrick as he is, would not suffer me to depart without some token of his kindness.

He brought me a cap lined with the finest fur, which he told me would be of service in the cold climate I was about to encounter.

The pang of regret penetrated my heart, when I bade the last farewell to these amiable friends; but when the ship was put in motion, and I saw those blest shores, "the favoured seats of the Gods of India," recede from my sight, my heart grew faint within me, and all my philosophy was insufficient to re-invigorate my sinking courage.

Sickness in a short time took from me the power of thinking. I have suffered under it so severely, that I have hitherto been unable to enjoy the society of my fellow-passengers, the female part of whom are still confined to their apartments by the cruel effects of this sea nausea, the most intolerable of all diseases! Upon the quarter-deck, I have met the husband of one of these ladies, who was ——of——, in which station he acquired a fortune, which though not the tenth of the sum that a Mussulman Dewan would have acquired, will, I am told, be sufficient

to give him distinction in his own country. The Commander of the ship, though among his men he appears like a lion of the forest, is to his passengers gentle as the deer of the mountain. I have already been much indebted to his politeness and civility. I have the same acknowledgment to make to the Surgeon, a young man whose quick and penetrating eye gives the promise of genius and discernment.

TIME, that great Physician, having in some degree reconciled our stomachs to the motion of the vessel, I have had the pleasure of being introduced to the fair companions of our voyage, who are three in number.

The first is the wife of the Dewan; her features are regular, but so insipid that I should not fail to pronounce her equally void of sense and feeling, was it not for the unlimited affection she evinces towards the

animal creation, which she carries to as exalted a height as any Hermit of Cummow. Surrounded by Parrots, Lorys, Maccaws, small Dogs, Persian Cats, and Monkeys of every description, she seems attracted towards them by a mysterious sympathy; while if her languid eyes are cast towards any of the company, it is only to express the language of disdain.

Notwithstanding my admiration of this amiable protectress of the brute creation, I cannot help feeling a superiour degree of pleasure in contemplating the uneffected charms and unassuming loveliness of a young widow, the beauty of whose countenance is shaded, though not concealed, by the veil of sorrow. Whilst bestowing on her fatherless babes the soft caresses of maternal tenderness, I have observed the tear which glistened on the silken fringe of her fine black eyes, mingled with the smiles of tender complacency.

Betwixt this Lady and her husband, at an early period of life, a mutual attachment

had taken place. Prudence could not at that time sanction their union: for in a country where luxury has fixed her residence, it becomes difficult to procure the necessaries of existence, and without these, how would a man answer the calls of an infant family? The affection of these lovers at length triumphed over every difficulty: the gentleman went to India, where, in process of time, he was promoted to the—— of——,and no sooner found himself in a situation to support a family, than he claimed the promise of his betrothed bride, who, throwing aside the timidity of her sex, and unprotected, save by the modest dignity of virtue, nobly braved the inconveniencies and hazards of an Indian voyage. She was received with transport by her anxiously expecting lover, whose happiness was completed by their immediate union. Their's was not that transient glow of joy, which, like the crimson-tinted cloud of morning, vanishes while gazed on; it was permanent as pure. Each met in each the enlightened companion, the wise adviser, the faithful

friend. But, alas! while fondly looking forward to a long period of felicity, the stroke of death suddenly destroyed the fair but fallacious prospect. You will, perhaps, think but indifferently of her, who in such circumstances would persevere in preserving life:—But it is the custom of her nation! And she perhaps imagines, that she may as effectually evince her regard to the memory of her husband, by devoting herself to the care and education of his children, as if she had mingled her ashes with his.

Three fine boys look up to her for protection, and already begin to benefit by her instructions. Their innocent vivacity, though a source of amusement to most of the party, is a great annoyance to the monkey-loving Bibby, who declares, that "of all the odious torments of a long voyage, that of being teased with the noise of children is the worst." At the sound of her voice, the dissonant screams of her feathered favourites seem to ratify the declaration of their fair benefactress; whilst the young and lively niece of the Dewan casts towards the many-

coloured objects of her aunt's affection such an expressive glance as seems to say they are *almost* as bad.

Of this young lady I can say little, but that she appears gay and good humoured. The Surgeon, indeed, from whom I have all my information respecting my fellow voyagers, tells me, that she had been brought to India by her uncle, in order to be married to the gentleman who was to succeed him in his appointment: but that on the voyage from Europe a mutual affection had taken place between her and a young votary of Lackshmee,* who must obtain the smiles of the Goddess before he can procure the hand of his mistress. Her uncle, in the mean while, insists on her return to Europe; and from the hilarity of her countenance I should not suppose the disappointment to have entered deeply into her heart.

* Fortune.

A SAD bustle has just taken place. One of the little boys having been allured into the great cabin by the comical tricks of a Marmozet, was attacked by a huge Baboon, one of the fiercest animals in Mrs.——'s collection. His cries soon gave the alarm; every one flew to the place from whence they issued. No description can give any idea of the confused scene which followed. The voice of the sufferer was soon lost in universal uproar. The screams of the ladies, the chattering of the monkeys, the barking of the dogs, to say nothing of the squalling of the parrots and macaws, made altogether such a noise that the thunder of the contending element could scarcely have been heard in it. When peace was at length restored, and the little boy, whose leg was sadly torn, had been committed to the care of the Surgeon, the Dewan ventured to remonstrate with his fair partner on the numbers and bad behaviour of her favourites. It was a tender point; the very mention of it, though managed with the utmost gentle-

ness, threw her into a paroxysm of anger, which at length terminated in a flood of tears. In truth, there appeared to me in these tears so much more of passion than of tenderness, that I could not regard them as any ornament to the cheek of beauty! Perhaps you may blame my insensibility, and bestow more unbounded admiration on this benevolent woman who generously prefers the welfare and happiness of her tailed and feathered favourites to the peace and comfort of her husband, and whose heart expands with more lively affection for the meanest quadruped in her possession than for the orphan child of any friend on earth.

Intelligence is just brought me of our having cast anchor in the road of Madrass.—I will from thence send you this letter. May it find you in the possession of the best blessings of life, health, and tranquillity!

What can I say more!

LETTER XII.

The day after I concluded my epistle from Madrass* we returned on board our ship, and the morning following weighed anchor and proceeded on our voyage, in company with many floating fortresses of superiour size, sent by the king of England to protect the fleet of the company. The gentleman who I mentioned to you in my last, proves indeed a valuable acquisition to our society. He, alas! returns to his country, *not* loaded with the riches of India, but possessing in his mind a treasure, more desirable than any wealth can purchase. It is from the sneer of worthless prosperity, from the contumely of successful pride, that Mr. Delo-

* Which letter does not appear—and is supposed by the Editor to have been lost.

mond goes to hide his misfortunes in the oblivious shade of retirement. "When the frowns of fortune are excessive, and human endeavours are exerted in vain, where but in the wilderness can comfort be found for a man of sensibility?" Such an one is Delomond; unable to struggle with the tempestuous gales of adverse fortune, he declines the contest. The pride of talents, and the consciousness of rectitude, may, he thinks, support him in his solitude; though he has found, from his experience, that they are often an obstacle to advancement in the world: the path that leads to fortune too often passing through the narrow defiles of meanness, which a man of an exalted spirit cannot stoop to tread.

The manly elegance with which Nature has endowed this Saib, together with an air of dignity which marks his whole deportment, commands the admiration of the whole party; even the lady of the Dewan, relaxing from the haughty languor of her usual manner, condescends to address him

with the utmost civility: and though her mistake as to his being *a man of fortune*, which from his appearance she had naturally concluded him to be, was soon rectified, she could not divest herself of the respectful deference which his manifest superiority so justly claims. She sometimes, indeed, when he is not present, wonders what people of *no fortune* mean by assuming the airs of quality?

In the conversation of Delomond and the beautiful widow, I have spent many delightful hours. The first possesses a rich mine of knowledge, from which I expect pure and genuine information. The latter is not less sensible, almost equally well informed, more lively in her ideas, and more quick in her discernment; but, at the same time, so modest and unassuming is this lovely woman, that I am sometimes at a loss which to admire most—the perfection of her understanding, or her unconsciousness of its superiority.

The indisposition of these two intelligent companions, has for some days past deprived me of their society; and I should have been at a great loss how to dispose of myself, had it not been for the goodness of the niece of the Dewan, who from her own library supplied me with a fund of instruction and amusement.

This young lady I have lately discovered to be a great lover of books; of which she has by far the most numerous collection of any person on board. But it is not surprising, that I should never have suspected her taste for literature. No one could possibly find it out from her conversation, which always turns upon the most trifling subjects. Notwithstanding the knowledge she must doubtless have acquired from the number of books she has read, she is so modest as never to utter a sentiment beyond vulgar observation, nor to attempt making use of her reason upon any occasion whatever; so that a person might easily believe her mind

to be still immersed in the depths of ignorance.

In the valuable collection of Biography, which this young lady kindly submitted to my perusal, the first book that attracted my attention, was, "the *History of a Nobleman;*" but I soon found, that the word *History* has more meanings in the English language than that which is given to it in the Dictionary. It is *there* said to be, "a narrative of events and facts, delivered with dignity." But the history of this illustrious nobleman consisted of nothing more than a few letters written in the days of juvenile folly on the subject of love!—Indeed, I cannot imagine why such immature productions should have been preserved at all; and still less can I conceive for what purpose they are given to the world, to whom the opinion which a young man entertains of the unparalelled beauty of his mistress's complexion can surely be of very little consequence. Other histories I found written in the manner of memoirs; these are said to contain the lives of illustri-

ous personages whose names adorn the title page. It appears very strange, that the lives of these great personages should abound in incidents so similar; an account of one will serve to give you an idea of the events that have occurred in fifty families, whose histories I have already read.

It happens, that a noble-born infant is deserted by its fond parents, and exposed to the care of chance, and the humanity of strangers. These fortunate foundlings never fail to be adopted by the first person who takes them up, and as these are always people of fortune, they receive from their bounty an education every way suitable to their *real* rank. As soon as the young nobleman attains the age of manhood, he falls in love with the daughter of his benefactor, a circumstance which involves the loving pair in the deepest misery. At length a period is put to their misfortunes by the discovery of the *real* parents, and the young lord is admitted to all the privileges of his order. You may now perhaps expect that the *his-*

tory should become more interesting and important, and be curious to hear how the young nobleman conducts himself in his new station; whether the experience he has had of life serves to expand his benevolence, to invigorate his intellectual powers, and to render him a more worthy member of that august tribunal, in which is concentrated the illustrious mass of hereditary virtue? As to all these points, you must content yourself to remain in ignorance; with the marriage of the hero, the *history* of his life concludes!

From this circumstance, and, indeed, from the whole tenor of these books, it appears evident, that with these islanders marriage is a certain passport to never failing and never fading bliss! A state nearly resembling that divine absorption of the soul described by our Yogees, which entirely excludes the cares and concerns of life, and in which the mind is wrapt in a delirium of perfect and uninterrupted felicity!—Happy country! where the prudence and fidelity

of the women of high rank so plainly evince the care that is bestowed on their instruction, and where the piety, learning and morality of the men is only to be equalled by their humility!

I will not conceal from you, that in these true and faithful pictures of the manners and morals of the people of England, I see much that appears to me extraordinary and incomprehensible. Here, it is said by our philosophers, that, "in this life (compounded of good and evil)* sickness and health, opulence and calamity, fruition and disappointment, are bound up together; *thus every thing is produced with a companion which shall destroy it.*" By this scheme of things, the wounds of affliction are ever within the reach of some cordial balm, which, if it does not heal, may at least serve to alleviate its anguish; while in the purest cup of felicity is mingled such particles as may serve to remind the mortal to whom it is presented

* Heetopades.

of the sublunary source from whence it flowed.—In England, on the contrary (if I am to believe these histories) happiness and misery are known only in extremes; there the tide of adversity sets in with such destructive fury, that the bare recital of the unheard-of calamities it occasions is sufficient to melt the hardest heart! Nor when the flood of fortune comes, is the torrent of prosperity which it produces less extraordinary and amazing! In its resistless career every barrier to happiness is broken down. The undeserving husband, the cruel father, and the malicious aunt, are all carried off by death: while riches, honours, titles, fine clothes, and spotless character, complete the felicity of the beautiful and loving pair, who are designed to be overwhelmed in this sea of bliss.

From the authority of these *authentick memoirs*, it appears, that marriage in Europe is never contracted but from the most pure and disinterested motives. Every young woman who is handsome and accomplished, however humble her birth, or small her for-

tune, is there certain of attracting the love and admiration of numbers of the highest rank in the community. What a glorious encouragement is held forth to the females of that happy island, who must be blind indeed not to perceive that it is their own *obstinacy* and *folly* that alone can possibly prevent their advancement to the very summit of felicity!

For such folly and obstinacy, whenever it occurs, a very peculiar and extraordinary punishment is reserved. After a few years, spent, as it is generally believed, in vain repentance and useless regret, they all at once, without any exceptions in favour of virtue, merit, useful or ornamental accomplishments, undergo a certain change, and incomprehensible transformation, and become what is termed OLD MAIDS. From all that I have hitherto been able to learn of these creatures, the Old Maid is a sort of venomous animal, so wicked in its temper and so mischievous in its disposition, that

one is surprised that its very existence should be tolerated in a civilized society.

After having spent many days in the study of those authors, so warmly recommended by the young Bibby, I began to apprehend that though to more enlightened minds they might doubtless prove a source of instruction and delight, they were not sufficiently adapted to my weak capacity to afford any recompense for the time spent in their perusal. Never before did my heart refuse its sympathy to human misery; but the distresses of the Lady Hariots, and the Lady Charlottes, which called forth the overflowings of compassion in the breasts of their fair correspondents, were of a nature too refined and delicate to be discernible to any save the miscroscopick eye of European sensibility!

The change which according to these sage writers of Novels has taken place in

human nature, must have been as sudden as it appears unaccountable. In the days of their great Dramatick Poet, *the Calidas of Europe*, it was certainly unknown; in his masterly delineations of the passions, it is every where and at every period the same: and from a perusal of his works, one would be tempted to imagine (notwithstanding the evidence of these *authentick memoirs* to the contrary) that though manners may differ and local customs fall into oblivion, the traits of kindred likeness, which the Creator has been pleased to impress on the great family of the human race, may, by a discerning eye, be traced through every clime and in every period of its existence! How otherwise should the immortal Calidas, who flourished two thousand years ago,* and the

* Calidas, the celebrated dramatick poet of India, flourished, according to Sir William Jones, in the first century before Christ; he was one of the nine men of genius, commonly called the *Nine Gems*, who were favoured with the patronage and splendidly supported by the

Bard of England, who was cotemporary with Ackbar, teach the heart to vibrate with the same sensations? The Sacontàla of the one and the Desdemona of the other speak so nearly the same language, that did I not believe the soul of the Indian poet to have been long absorbed in the regions of felicity, I should undoubtedly imagine that it was Calidas himself, who, under the name of Shakspeare, again vouchsafed to enlighten and delight the world!—It is at least evident that they have both copied from the same original—*Unchanging, everlasting Nature!*

A CHASM of many weeks has taken place in my journal. Alas! When I undertook

bounty of Vicramàdityes, a monarch eminently distinguished by his taste for literature.

(See the preface to Sir William Jones's translation of *Sacontala.*)

to write it, I was not aware of the tedious uniformity of a sea voyage. But though void of incident, the scene has not been destitute of instruction. By time, and increasing intimacy, the characters of my companions have been more fully developed. The first sketch that was drawn by the hasty pencil of imagination, I confidently pronounced to be a striking likeness; but very different now appears the picture that has been delineated by slow working observation.

In my letter from Madrass,* I informed you of the acquisition I expected from the society of the young officer, whose sprightly manners and communicative disposition gave the promise of an everpleasing companion. But, alas! I soon discovered that sprightliness and loquacity are by no means united with urbanity and cheerfulness.—The small stock of personal anecdote, with which the incidents of his life had furnished

* This letter is not to be found.

him, was no sooner exhausted, than he became dull, insipid and morose. Nor was the change which seemed wrought on his temper less extraordinary than that which took place in his manners. This youth, seemingly so gentle; who took such pleasure in obliging; who lived but to promote the happiness of others, gives every day such convincing proofs of the malignity of his disposition, in the cruel treatment he bestows upon his younger brother, that it is impossible to behold it without feelings of horrour and indignation.

How different from this is the change that has taken place in my opinion, concerning the character of the Dewan. Alas! I fear that in more instances than these my first opinion has been like an unjust judge, who suffers his decisions to be influenced by the eloquence of flattery. Self-love whispers that those who are pleased with us, are pleasing; and it is not till experience has convinced us of our errour, that we are willing to listen to the voice of truth. The

reserve and silence which at first seemed to give to the character of the Dewan an appearance of sullenness and stupidity, gradually cleared away, by time and encreasing intimacy, and discovered to us incontestable proofs of a mild and placid temper, a deeply-thinking, well-informed mind, and a humane and benevolent heart.

The conduct of his lady has not, I confess, undergone much change; but my opinion of it has been somewhat altered by an insight into its motives.

That haughty and arrogant demeanour which I had conceived to flow from the conscious superiority of birth and merit, was, it seems, assumed by folly to conceal the real meanness of both. Her history appeared to me so very extraordinary, that had I not had the most convincing proofs of the veracity of my informer, I confess, I should have been led to doubt its truth.

This disdainful Lady, whom I had considered as some highly exalted personage, was the daughter of a tradesman, "whose

foolish fondness," said the Surgeon, (for I give you his very words) bestowed upon her such an education, as, without instructing her in the qualities that are alone suited to adorn an exalted rank, rendered her unfit for becoming wife to a man in her own. At the death of this parent, she laid out the small fortune he bequeathed her in fine clothes, and took her passage to Bengal, where she did not doubt that her beauty would procure her an advantageous marriage. The event proved equal to her expectations. On her arrival, she was seen by the Dewan, who admired, courted, and married her!" "I thought," said I, interrupting my informer, "that Europeans had made companions of their wives. Surely, this woman was not qualified for being the companion of such a man as the Dewan. It is not possible to imagine, that her intellectual deficiencies would be unobserved by a man of his sense and penetration." "The Dewan was too much charmed with her beauty, to observe any deficiency in her

merit," replied the Surgeon; "or, if he did, she was so young, that he promised himself much pleasure in filling the office of Preceptor." Alas! he considered not that pride is the usual concomitant of ignorance; that it is not the understanding which has been perverted by vanity, prejudice, and folly, that will listen to the instructions of a husband. Her hopes of happiness were from the enjoyment of his fortune.

"Elated by her exaltation to affluence, she thought that to realize the dreams of bliss, formed by her fond fancy, she had only to indulge in every capricious whim of vanity. Her extravagance was unbounded. But soon she found that it was not in the power of splendid equipage, or fantastick finery, to fill the chasm of an empty mind.

"The delight of unrivalled pre-eminence in every article of expensive ornament, soon gave place to sullen apathy and fretful discontent. New follies were invented and pursued with no better success, and it will, perhaps, astonish you to learn, that her

mighty fondness for the brute creation, instead of proceeding from the pure source of true benevolence, was in reality no other than an effort of the animal spirits, to procure an object of employment to her ever restless mind."

Here ceased my kind informer, who left me very much astonished at the picture he had drawn of an English woman and a Christian.

After much reflection I think I can trace the unenlightened state of this woman's understanding to her want of instruction. Had she received her education at one of those wise, learned, and pious seminaries, called boarding-schools, her mind would no doubt have been vigilantly defended from the noxious breath of vanity and conceit, She would *there* have learned according to the precepts of her Shaster, to have adorned herself with "shamefacedness and sobriety." "Not with broidered hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array, but (which becometh women possessing godliness) with good works." Such, no doubt, is the education

of *Christian* women, at *Christian* schools! How does it exalt my opinion of the native genius of the young widow, when I contemplate the extent of her acquired knowledge, her unaffected humility, her undeviating discretion, and at the same time consider, that by her own account, she never enjoyed the advantages of instruction at one of these enlightened seminaries, but was confined during the early part of her life to the roof of her parents! Is it not surprising that, notwithstanding this disadvantage, she should have made such proficiency in every accomplishment? My first sentiments concerning her remain unaltered. Her exalted sentiments continue to excite my admiration, while her sweet temper and ever obliging disposition make daily progress in my esteem.

THE morning after I last laid down my pen, we arrived at a small island, which the

benignant hand of Nature seems to have (erected) in the midst of the mighty ocean, as a convenient* Choultrie for the floating caravanseras that traverse its watery bosom. Here we spent nearly twenty days, and were entertained by the inhabitants, who appear a gay and lively people, with much kindness and hospitality.

The change of scene was relished by all the party, but by none so much as the niece of the Dewan, to whom the uniform life we led on board ship, was become altogether insupportable. She had indeed for a long time been at a most pitiable loss for employment. The contents of her library, which I imagined would have afforded her a fund of amusement and edification during the course of her voyage, were soon exhausted. Having once found out how all the wished-for marriages of all the heroes and heroines were brought about, and been let into the secret of the surprising discoveries, lucky

* Choultries, are houses built in India for the accommodation of travellers.

accidents, and miraculous combination of circumstances, which uniformly led to that happy event, she had no further interest nor curiosity concerning them. These books had, nevertheless, by giving constant fuel to the vivid flame of youthful imagination, created such an insatiable craving for novelty, as rendered every other sort of reading tasteless and insipid. Even the ever entertaining conversation of our intelligent companions had no charms for her. I have frequently known the chain of an interesting argument, to which I have been listening with avidity and delight, all at once interrupted, by her abruptly asking, when we should see land? Whatever gave the promise of variety, seemed to re-animate her flagging spirits: whether it was the appearance of a flying-fish, or the rumoured approach of an enemy, the drowning of a kitten, or the indications of a coming storm, all were equally acceptable, so that they relieved her from the tedious task of thought. The approach to St. Helena made her almost wild with joy. No sooner was it

announced, than she flew to her cabin to take from her trunk some particular dresses, which she had reserved for the occasion, and hastily displaying them before the amiable widow, asked her fifty questions in a breath concerning the important point of which was most becoming.

Besides the novelty of the scenes and amusements at St. Helena, she there made another acquisition, which, I hope, will afford her sufficient variety of entertainment for many weeks to come. This is no other than a fresh supply of novels! This she happily accomplished, by exchanging the contents of her library with another *reading fair one*, whom she accidently met at a ball, and with whom, on an acquaintance of three days she commenced an *extreme* and *ardent* friendship. The great loquacity with which her present flow of spirits has inspired this votary of fancy, is sometimes no less teazing than the effects of her former ennui: to the elegant, but somewhat too fastidious Delomond, it is peculiarly irksome.

In truth, it is not a little to be regretted, that this amiable man frequently indulges a certain soreness of mind, which may not improperly be termed the illegitimate offspring of sensibility. What proves its spurious birth, is, that while genuine sensibility is ever alive to the feelings of others, this bastard branch of the family is only mindful of its own. By being ever ready to take offence, without considering whether offence was intended to be given, it frequently inflicts a wound in the bosom of friendship; but is unfeelingly insensible to the pain which it has produced. What a pity it is, that this impostor should ever find a place in the breast of a worthy man! I cannot without pain behold it cherished by the dignified mind of Delomond, and would not fail to remonstrate with him concerning it, was he not so *easily hurt* that I fear an estrangement of his friendship might be the consequence. Fatal propensity! which presents a barrier to the wholesome succours of advice and cuts off retreat from errour. In the va-

rious sketches which this amiable and accomplished Saib has given me of his life and his misfortunes, I can plainly discern, that the disposition I have just now alluded to has been no less detrimental to his fortune than injurious to his felicity.

I SUSPECT that you are now almost as much tired of the voyage as the niece of the Dewan, and begin to re-echo her interrogatory of when shall we see land? But courage, keep up your spirits, your patience will not be put to a much longer trial.—Land has been just discovered from the topmast-head.—I cannot avoid envying the happy sailor, who from the giddy height catches the first view of his dear native country. Ah! what pleasing images play about his heart! in that little speck appearing in the distant horizon, he beholds his little home, his tender wife, his endearing infants, and

already, in imagination, feels and returns their soft caresses. I go to participate in the joy of these honest people; it is a bad heart to which the *happiness of a fellow mortal* can be indifferent.

Ah! Maandaara, how astonishingly great has been my disappointment! Instead of the expected appearance of felicity, I beheld in the countenances of the hitherto hearty and contented sailors the strongest indications of consternation, terrour, and dismay! On inquiring into the cause of this alarm, I was told that it arose from the rumoured approach of a *press-gang*; a press-gang I never before heard of, but from the degree of terrour it inspires, I can easily conceive it to be some infernal species of monster, some cruel servant to the genii of the deep, to whom the long-absent sailor is an acceptable sacrifice. Accursed spirits! the terrour of whose name can put to flight the tender images of hope, and can induce despair at a moment when the sweetest impulses of nature have kindled the torch of joy!

At the moment I laid down my pen, a fine boy of about fifteen years of age, who had frequently in the course of the voyage attracted my notice, burst into my cabin. "For the love of God, assist me dear, dear Sir," cried he, "the press-gang are already here, and I know I shall not escape! For myself, I should not care; but my poor, poor mother! she will never survive it. I know she won't. Alas! she has no son but me.—Her heart is now yearning to embrace me. O! it will break if she is disappointed!" I gave him time to say no more, but having hastily emptied a large trunk made him leap into it, and there detained him until I was assured that these children of Nareyka had retired. Alas! they did not retire without prey! above thirty of those brave fellows, whose useful labours have conduc-

ed to the enrichment and prosperity of their country; who, after an absence of twenty months, hoped to reap the reward of their toils by returning to its bosom, were dragged reluctant victims to the infernal demon of power!

Nor are these the only monsters that infest the British coast.—Much apprehension is entertained by the seamen and passengers, for certain savages, called *Custom-house Officers*; who, it seems, are particularly ferocious towards those who come from the East.

Praise to the preserving Spirit!—Our watery pilgrimage begins to draw near its close. At ten this morning we cast our anchor at the distance of about one coss from one of the principal naval ports in England. All on board is now hurry and confusion, every eye sparkles with the eager-

ness of expectation, and every heart seems warm with the thoughts of once more beholding their friends and their native country; it is the tumult of delight; the dread of the custom-house officers is forgotten; I suppose our fleet was too formidable for these savages to dare to make any attack upon it. And now that we are within sight of an English port, we can have nothing to fear. Seeing every one making preparations for going ashore, I retired to spend an hour at my pen; but the increasing bustle renders it impossible for me to proceed further at present.

On going upon deck, I was surprised to observe a number of strange faces, and anxiously inquired what kind friends had taken this early opportunity of greeting our arrival?—With astonishment I learned, that the strangers were no other than the dread-

ed custom-house officers. In manners, dress, stature, and complexion, nay even in language, these savages bear so strong a resemblance to the English, that they might at a slight view be mistaken for the same; but, on a more accurate examination of their countenances, evident traces of their savage origin may be easily discerned. They are less ferocious than the - - - - -, and seldom murder those who fall into their hands, unless in cases of resistance. This they did not meet with from any of us; but got leave to rifle, rob and plunder, without any hindrance or molestation. Their avidity for plunder, though eager beyond description, seems to be accompanied by the strangest caprice. On the commodities of Europe they seemed to set no value, but seized with savage rapacity on the more elegant productions of the East. In respect to these, the niece of the Dewan and myself have been the greatest sufferers. A beautiful piece of silver muslin, which the fair reader of Novels had treasured up as her choicest

ornament, and on which she set a tenfold value from its being of a similar description to that which was worn by the Right Hon. Lady Araminta Eleanora Bloomville on the day of her nuptials, was seized by these relentless barbarians without remorse. With a copious flood of tears she besought them to spare her favourite robe; but, alas! the supplications of beauty touched not the heart of these savage plunderers, who beheld unmoved the pearly drops which coursed each other down the fair one's cheek! My cabin afforded a still more ample share of plunder. The shawls, the muslins, which I intended to have presented to the sister of Percy, and the less costly, though in the eye of affection no less valuable presents, which the generosity of Grey had enabled young Morton to send to his family; all, all, were seized by the unhallowed hands of these ruthless spoilers! Had they taken my whole chest of gold Mhors, it would not have grieved me half so much! But as it is a misfortune for which I perceive there is

no remedy, I must have recourse to that *only* physick of the hopeless—Patience.

From the Queen of the ocean, the favoured Island of Great Britain, does the wandering Zaarmilla now address the most beloved of friends.—Having taken leave of the Captain and officers, and returned well-merited thanks for their kind attention during our voyage, we went into a boat, which had been sent from the harbour for the conveyance of the passengers, and were quickly landed on one of the ghauts of Portsmouth; it is impossible to convey to your imagination any notion of the magnificence of the spectacle that presented itself to our view in this short sail. No idea of the sublimity of a fleet of floating fortresses can possibly be conceived by those who have not beheld the unequalled scene. The army of the most powerful Monarch of the East, though

numerous as the grains of sand upon the shores of the sea, the dust of the feet of whose Elephants obscures the noonday sun, cannot, in point of grandeur, bear comparison with an assemblage of these glories of the ocean that ride triumphant in an English port.

We have taken up our present abode at a sort of Choultrie, called an Hotel, and are to spend the remainder of the day together. To-morrow we shall separate, perhaps for ever! The lovely widow, in whose countenance I see the emotions of tender recollections struggling with that amiable fortitude which strives to repress the feelings of unavailing sorrow, purposes going to the house of a friend, at a few miles distance from this place, and there to wait the arrival of her mother. I am to have the happiness of Delomond's company on my journey to London, which is a very great comfort to me, as I find myself almost as much at a loss here as if I had never before been in an English settlement. The Dewan has been

busily employed in preparations for the conveyance of his family. His Lady's extreme delicacy not permitting her to submit to the ordinary mode of travelling in hired carriages, he has been obliged to purchase one for her accommodation. Happily, the mortality which prevailed amongst her favourites, in the course of the voyage, has so much diminished their numbers as to render their conveyance a matter of little COMPARATIVE difficulty; had they all survived, he must surely have had a carriage built for them on purpose!

I AM happy I had not closed this packet, as it gives me an opportunity of recording a scene that has just now passed, while my heart still glows with the emotions it has excited.

The youth, whom I had the good fortune to protect from the ruthless fangs of the

press-gang, presented himself before me at an early hour this morning.—"You will think me a sad ungrateful fellow, Sir," said he, "that I should not have appeared to thank you for the very great service you rendered me; but the moment I obtained the Captain's leave I made the best of my way out of this place, as I did not think I should be in safety till I reached home. I set off on foot, and had got rather more than ten miles on my journey last night, when I was overtaken by a fellow midshipman, who informed me of the loss you had sustained from the sharks of the custom-house; I have got here a bit of your India sort of stuff to take home to my mother; but I know she would wear nothing I brought her with any satisfaction if she thought so meanly of me as that I could basely forget a debt of gratitude." So saying he pulled from his bosom a very handsome shawl, purchased, no doubt with the scanty earnings of his initiating voyage. "Here, Sir," said he, presenting it to me in

a careless manner, as if in order to depreciate its value; "it is nothing to be sure in comparison of the fine things you have lost; but as it is *real Indian*, it may be more acceptable to your English friends than something much better bought at home." There was something so open and ingenuous in the countenance of the youth, while he spoke these words, which he did in the most impressive manner, that he altogether overpowered my feelings. Protecting power! I exclaimed, thou whose mighty breath can kindle in the human soul the flame of virtue, oh! grant that the son of Zaarmilla may be capable of inspiring in the breast of a stranger such sensations as the noble action of this youth causes now to glow in mine! But think not, excellent young man (continued I) that I can deprive thy mother of the gift of such a son. No, long may she wear this, and proudly may she exhibit it to her friends and neighbours as the sweet pledge of filial affection, more honourable than the gifts of princes! more precious

than the jewels of Golconda! I was interrupted by the Dewan, who had hitherto been a silent spectator of all that had passed. Shaking the youth heartily by the hand, "You are a noble fellow," said he, "and I must know more of you; but you may make yourself perfectly easy about this gentleman's losses, as I believe I have taken such steps as will effect their restitution; but I must let you know where to find me, and assure you, that wherever I am there you shall have a friend." So saying, he gave him his address, enjoining him to call upon him as soon as he could find an opportunity. While he yet spoke, two men arrived with the whole of the goods which had been seized by the pirates. The Dewan desired each of us to pick out our own; but would give us no satisfaction as to the manner in which he had effected their release.

I am told the carriage waits for me, and must therefore conclude this long protracted journal.

May the Almighty Preserver, whose omnipotent arm hath safely guided me across the world of waters to this remote corner of the habitable globe, He, whose essence pervades all space! shed the dews of his mercy on the dwelling of my friend! may his choicest blessings rest on the child of my affections! the blossom of my heart! and may the sweet buds of hope, peace, and contentment, continue to expand in the virtuous bosom of my gentle Zamarcanda!

What can I say more?

LETTER XIII.

At length, Maandaara, behold me in the metropolis of England, the celebrated city of London. My heart bounds within me at the idea of the new scenes I am about to behold. The pulse of expectation beats in every vein.—I was all impatience to deliver my letters of introduction; but, unluckily, we arrived at the very season of a solemn festival, which is very properly celebrated by the Christians in commemoration of an event which opened to their view the glorious hopes of rising from the bed of death to the regions of eternal glory!—You may well imagine that a festival originating in such a source is celebrated throughout the Christian world with appropriate solemnity. With them, the forms and ceremonies of their religion, remain not merely as a testimony of the superiour piety which produced

them. These institutions have not become a reproach to the degeneracy of succeeding ages! They have not, with them, become a solemn mockery! a satire upon a trifling and frivolous generation! No; at the time of these holydays, most of the families of distinction retire into the country, that they may there enjoy the heart-purifying benefit of solemn meditation, uninterrupted by the business or pleasures of the world. Ah! how edifying their devotion!—How exemplary their conduct!—How happy for the community must it be, if the lower orders are induced to tread in their footsteps! The few people of rank who remain in town, are equally sedulous in preparing their minds for this devout solemnity.—They frequent no places that are not private:—private theatricals, private concerts, private pharo-banks, I have already heard of; and I make no doubt, there are numerous other places of private resort, equally honourable to religion and favourable to virtue!

By the kind care of my friend Delomond, I am provided with a very convenient lodging, in the street which leads to the King's palace. This palace is, in truth, but a mean building, very unlike the Durbar of an Eastern Monarch.

I HAVE spent the greater part of the week in taking a survey of the town and examining its temples and other publick buildings. —The extent of this metropolis, though it shrinks into insignificance when compared with the Imperial residence of our ancient Rajahs, the celebrated birth place of Rama,* or the Ganga-washed walls of Canouge;† is

* Oude, said in the Mahhabaret to have been the first regular Imperial city of Hindostan, extended, if we may believe the Bramins, over a line of ten Yogans, or about *forty miles*; and the present city of Lucknow was only a lodge for one of its gates.

† Canouge, a celebrated ancient city of Hindostan, on the banks of the Ganges; whose walls are said in the

yet sufficiently great to strike with astonishment the insignificant mortal who has beheld only the modern cities of Hindostan. The foot-paths which are raised at the sides of every street, are filled with a busy throng, where it is curious to behold women, as well as men, apparently intent upon business, entering into the shops and making purchases with the undaunted mien of masculine assurance. Far from walking along the streets with that timid air of shrinking modesty, which distinguishes the females of our race* when they venture into the walks of men, their fearless eye undaunted meets the glances of every beholder; and happy is it for the men of the country, that it doth so; for if modesty was super-added to their other charms it would be impossible to guard the heart from their fascinating influence.

Mahhabaret to have been one hundred miles in circumference.

* See the elegant engravings, illustrative of Mr. Hodges's remarks on this subject, in his *Travels in India*.

Having heard that the first day of the week, Audeetye-war,* was appointed for attending the worship of the deity in publick, I expressed to Delomond my wish of being present at the solemnity. He declined accompanying me; but sent to a Lady of his acquaintance to beg she would accommodate me with a seat in her pew.—These pews, are little inclosures, into which the greatest part of the temple is sub-divided. We walked up to that which belonged to this Bibby, preceded by one of her servants, who opened the door of the pew, and followed by another in the same livery who carried the books of prayer, with which having presented us, he retired. I have already observed to you, how scrupulously the English Christians adhere to those precepts of their Shaster, which seem to discountenance the outward appearance of a religious senti-

* It is very remarkable, that the days of the week are named in the Shanscrit language from the same planets to which they were assigned by the Greeks and Romans.

ment; and so rigorously do they abstain from the display of these delightful emotions, that they who will thankfully acknowledge most trifling obligation conferred upon them by the meanest of their fellow-creatures, would blush to be suspected of gratitude to the beneficent Governour of the Universe! Instead of behaving in this temple as if they had assembled together to send up their united tribute of praise, thanksgiving, and humble supplication to the Most High, so successfully did they affect the concealment of their devotional sentiments, that no one would have suspected they had met together for any other purpose but that of staring at each other's dress! I must, however, make an exception in regard to a small number of people, very plainly habited, who stood during the service in a part of the church called the aisle; these appeared *not* to have arrived at such a state of perfection. *They* could not affect *indifference*, as they joined in the petition for averting the punishment of sins; nor conceal the interest they had

in the glad tidings of eternal happiness. They listened with peculiar complacency to the accounts of him who "came to preach the gospel to the poor," and the hopes of his favour seemed to irradiate with joy the bosom of resignation. A female of advanced life, in whom all these emotions were discernable, particularly arrested my attention. The paleness of her countenance spoke her want of health, and the lines which sorrow had traced in it accorded with the sable weeds of widow-hood which she wore. She appeared ready to faint from the fatigue of long standing, and made a modest application to a person, who seemed to act as porter of the pews, for admittance into one of them. To my astonishment, she met with a refusal; nor did any one of the gorgeously apparelled Christians, who sat in them, appear to be any way concerned for her situation; indeed they all seemed to regard those who worshipped God from the aisle, as if they had been beings of an inferiour race. I was, however, well convinced,

that Christianity admits of no such distinctions; and supposing the Christian Lady who sat by me, though her eyes were roving to all parts of the temple, was, in reality, too much engaged in her devotions to observe what passed, I took the liberty of acting for her, and opening the door of the pew, invited the poor sick stranger to a seat. At that moment the priest was prefering a petition, in favour of all "fatherless children, and widows, and *all who are desolate and oppressed;*" to which the great Lady had just uttered the response of, "We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord!"—when observing the poor woman by her side, her face instantly flushed a deep crimson; rage and indignation darted from her eyes, and telling the fainting stranger that "she was very impudent for daring to intrude herself into her presence," she turned her out into the aisle. I was weak enough to be shocked at the behaviour of this well-dressed votary of Christianity. Ah! thought I, can it be, that this woman should be so conscious of her

superiority in every thing which constitutes distinction in the eye of the Omnipotent, as to consider *herself* worthy of *sitting in his presence,* while she spurns from her own the humble child of poverty and affliction?

I HAVE just returned from my first visit to Doctor Severan, the gentleman to whose attentions Grey has most particularly recommended me; nor could he, according to the opinion of Delomond, have done me a more essential service. My accomplished friend, who was, it seems, the companion of his youthful studies, tells me, that at the university it appeared evident that he was born to be the ornament of Science. Whilst other young men were pursuing the gaudy phantom of pleasure, his time was occupied in investigating the Laws of Nature, in tearing the choicest secrets from her reluctant bosom, or in tracing her foot-steps through

the various phænomena of the material world.—Nor, continued Delomond, as we drove to this gentleman's house, is he less estimable as a man than respectable as a philosopher. But, indeed, the connexion between philosophy and virtue is "so natural that it is only their separation that can excite surprise; for is not the very basis of science a sincere and disinterested love of truth? An enlarged view of things cannot fail to destroy the effects of prejudice: and while it awakens in the mind the most sublime ideas of the great original cause, it promotes, most necessarily, a detestation of every thing that is mean or base." We just then stopped at the door of his friend, and were ushered into an apartment surrounded with shelves of books, arranged in no very good order; every table, and almost every seat, was occupied by numerous odd shaped vessels, some of glass, and others of metal, but for what use I could not possibly comprehend. The philosopher himself at length appeared. A tall thin man, of about forty

years of age, his dress put on in a manner particularly careless; but his countenance, so mild and serious! it was the very personification of benignity. He appeared rejoiced at seeing Delomond, who, if possible, was exalted in my esteem by seeing the degree of estimation in which he was held by the philosopher. Myself he received in the most gracious manner; and by his kindness to me he gave the most convincing proof of his regard for my friend Grey, of whom, indeed, he spoke very handsomely. He informed me, that Lady Grey, widow to the brother of our friend, was then at her country residence, but that her brother, Sir Caprice Ardent, for whom I had likewise a letter of introduction, was in London; and added, that he should do himself the pleasure of accompanying me to the house of this gentleman the day after to-morrow, and hoped that I would come *to eat my breakfast with him before we went.* You will smile at the invitation: and, no boubt, be surprised to find this philosopher, whom one would expect to soar above the practices and

notions of the vulgar, taking such a method of shewing his hospitality; but it is a difficult thing to get the better of early prejudice; nor does the generality of mankind in any country inquire into the propriety of customs to which they have been rendered familiar by use. Though to us it appears highly absurd, as well as grossly indelicate, to see people looking in each others' faces while they chew their food, and calling it sociable to swallow their morsel at the same moment; it is possible that these Europeans may think our solitary manner of eating equally ridiculous; and if they abstain from censuring it, is it not a proof of their being more enlightened? Often have I observed to you, and often do I see reason to repeat the observaton, *that it is they only who have conquered the force of prejudice in themselves, that can make any allowance for the effects of it in others.*

Coffee-houses, similar to that described in one of my letters from Calcutta, are to be met with in every quarter of this city. Those I have here seen, are schools of politicks, resorted to by all who take an interest in publick affairs;—a true and authentick statement of which is daily printed on large sheets of paper, and copies are, I am told, sent to every part of the Island. In the Coffee-houses, these are handed about from politician to politician, and furnish matter for the general discourse. For my part, though possessed of a sufficient share of curiosity, I did not care to be too forward in seeking to pry into the state affairs of the country; but having accompanied Delomond, yesterday, into a neighbouring coffee-house, and hearing a gentleman who sat near me, declare, that the paper he was then perusing was indubitably published under the immediate direction of the British minister, I could not restrain my impatience to examine its contents—and the moment he laid it down I eagerly flew to its perusal.

It is impossible to describe to you the admiration with which the reading of this paper inspired me, for the talents and virtues of this sapient noble, who presides in the supreme councils of this happy nation. So extensive! so multifarious! so minute are the subjects of his concerns, that one contemplates with astonishment the mind that is capable of grasping such an infinity of objects. In one paragraph he reports to the nation the account of a victory which their armies had obtained, *or nearly obtained*, over the forces of their Christian enemies; tells the numbers of the slain—of those who are still suffering the agonies of pain, far from the soothing balm of affection! far from the healing consolations of friendship!—To the families of such as are in a situation to afford the expensive insignia of sorrow, the names of their fallen friends are announced; but to the poor, who can only afford to wear mourning in their hearts, there is no necessity of giving such a particular account of their friends; it is sufficient for them to

know, that few, very few of them can ever again behold their native homes! In the next paragraph, this puissant statesmen informs the world of the safe arrival in town of Sir Dapper Dawdle, in his phaeton and four; which, and many similar pieces of intelligence, are, no doubt, given with the beneficent intention of informing the poor and wretched where they may find their benefactors, those who by their liberal and repeated acts of charity have obtained *the blessing of them who are ready to perish.* Nor is the nourishment of the mind neglected by this wise minister; the publick are informed, in this newspaper, where such books are to be had, as are, doubtless, best calculated for their instruction. I have already told you, that the females of this place go themselves into the shops, in order to purchase what they want; and, methinks, it is highly praise-worthy of this good superintendant of the kingdom, to point out to the fair creatures where they may lay out their money to the most advantage. They

are in one part, strongly assured of the superiour excellence of the goods at the Pigeons; in another, they are conjured to buy their stockings at the Fleece; their shoes, their gloves, nay the very powder, with which they disfigure their beautiful hair, are all objects of this good nobleman's tender anxiety; indeed, the proper decoration of their persons seems to employ no inconsiderable portion of his attention; there is no deformity of the body, no disorder of the skin, against which they are not here provided with a remedy. Nor doth *royal* dignity itself disdain to extend its cares to beautifying and adorning the female subjects of these realms. You will, perhaps, smile, to hear of the *royal* firman's being attached to the ladies' garters? But there is not a brush for their nails, nor a soap for their hands, nor a powder for their teeth, nor wash for their pretty faces, that is not as highly honoured. Alas! how much are these females indebted to a Prince who evinces such unequalled solicitude for the preservation of their beauty!

Nor doth the parental care of royalty for the welfare of the people stop here; their health is an object of peculiar concern; innumerable are the lists of medicines, of approved efficacy, which are here recommended to the publick; I reckoned above sixty that had received the *royal* sanction, sealed by the *royal* arms and mentioned by *royal* authority; when we reflect, how many nauseous draughts the *royal* counsellors must needs have tasted; how many bitter pills they, doubtless, must have swallowed, before they could advise his Majesty on a subject so important; we can scarcely refrain from pitying the situation of those whose high stations impose upon them the performance of such disagreeable duties!!—I could furnish you with further proofs of the tender care of this government for the health and happiness of its subjects, but am obliged to leave off on account of my visit to Sir Caprice Ardent.

I FORGET whether I informed you, that a necessary part of my establishment is a carriage. A model of which I have this morning purchased for you at what is called a toy-shop, that you may form some idea of the manner in which the great are drawn about the streets of this city. Numbers, however, even of an exalted rank, occasionally walk: nor is it thought any degradation to make use of their own legs. I this morning met the heir apparent of the throne walking on foot in the very street in which I live; far from appearing in my eyes as shorn of his dignity, by thus condescending to mingle with his people, it shed upon it, in my opinion, a beam of additional lustre. Ah! what a transcendent degree of excellence must we suppose these highly favoured Princes to possess, who, together with the dignified sentiments of their exalted rank, enjoy the advantages of that instruction which is only to be obtained by commerce with the world! The mirror of truth is set before them, and surely they will

never turn from it to view themselves through the distorting medium of venal flattery and deceitful adulation!!—But to return from this digression; I took up Dr. Severan, according to appointment, and proceeded with him to the house of the Baronet, which is situated at the upper end of a short street, none of the buildings of which are yet completed; they seem as if they were intended for houses of very different sizes and shapes, and at present have a very strange appearance; but it is impossible to form any idea of what they may be when finished. The entrance to the house of Sir Caprice, was somewhat obstructed by heaps of rubbish, occasioned, as we soon learned, by the destruction of a row of pillars, of Grecian architecture, with which the hall had been originally graced. These proud ornaments, which during the short period of their exaltation had heard the lofty roof which they sustained re-echo the voices of their flatterers, were on a sudden disgraced, dismissed, and hurled headlong to the

ground! Their fall was like that of the favourites of Princes, which shakes the throne they once appeared destined to support. A long train of dependants were involved in the mighty ruin, and it was not without some degree of danger, that, following the servant, we scrambled through this scene of desolation to the apartment of Sir Caprice, whom we found seated at a large table, on which an innumerable quantity of plans, maps, models of buildings, and other various ornaments, were heaped. After reading the letter I had brought him, congratulating me on my arrival in England, and inquiring after the health of Mr. Grey, he turned to Doctor Severan, and expressed, in strong terms, the particular pleasure he at that moment felt in seeing him.—"I know you are a man of taste," cried he, "and shall be wonderfully happy to have your advice on the plan of a new building which I intend shall be something very extraordinary. Here it is," continued he, holding up a small model; "here, you see, I

have contrived to unite all the orders of architecture in regular gradation; here, you will please to observe that the basis is truly Gothick; above that, observe the Tuscan; above that, the Composite, the Corinthian, the Dorick, the Ionick—all placed as they never were placed before! Still, however, the top is unfinished; for that I have had many plans; but that which pleases me best, is, the idea of crowning the whole with a Chinese temple; is it not a good thought, eh? Perhaps this gentleman, could furnish me with a hint. Pray Sir," turning to me, "has the Emperor of China done any thing new in this way of late?" The philosopher, perceiving my confusion, reminded this noble builder that I was from Bengal and had never been in China in my life. "From Bengal? Ay, ay, I had forgot; a Hindoo is he? well, well, perhaps, then, he could give me a plan of a Mosque, a Minaret, or some such thing, it would oblige me extremely, as it would be something quite new and uncommon," Perceiving that he waited my

answer, I told him, that I certainly had had many opportunities of seeing Mosques, some of the most stately of which were built from the ruins of our ancient temples, particularly that at Benares, the Minarets of which were esteemed eminently beautiful; but that as I had never been in one, I was altogether unqualified to give an accurate description of them. "Did not trouble church much, I suppose, Sir?" rejoined he, with an arch smile. "Good heaven!" cried Severan, "do you not know, that a Mosque is a Mahomedan place of worship, and have I not already told you that this gentleman is a Hindoo?"—"Ay, ay, I had forgot, he is a *heathen*. So much the better; I shall love him, if he hates all priests and priest-ridden fools; I never knew any good come of either." So saying he offered me his hand, and shook mine in a most cordial manner. He then renewed his solicitations for the opinion of Severan, in regard to the manner in which

he should finish his projected building* (a building for which he had not yet fixed upon a situation;) the philosopher eluded any further dissertations on the subject with great dexterity, and finally prevailed upon him to introduce us to the apartment of his Lady.

We found Lady Ardent and her eldest daughter in the apartment called the drawing-room. They were prepared to go out, and had their carriage waiting for them at the door; but on our entrance politely resumed their seats. The countenance of neither of these ladies exhibited one single line that could lead to the development of their characters; all was placid uniformity and *unspeaking* regularity of feature. Surely, said I to myself, these women must have arrived at the very zenith of perfec-

* Explanations of the terms of Architecture, &c. though very necessary to the friends of the Rajah, it was thought, would be rather tiresome to the English reader; they are therefore omitted by the Translator, who has frequently been obliged to take liberties of the same nature.

tion! How effectually must every passion have been subdued under the glorious empire of reason, before they could have attained such inexpressive indifference? It is true, that in their eyes, the sparkling chubdar* of intellect doth not proclaim his master's presence—but the apathy which sits upon their foreheads speaks in plain language their contempt of the world and its vanities. With them, as with the beloved of Krishna, pain and pleasure are as one! The modesty of female bashfulness sealed the lips of the young lady, but her mother inquired after my friend Grey, if not with affection, at least with much politeness. She treated me (as I was told by Doctor Severan) with an uncommon degree of attention. She gave me a slip of stiff paper, on which was marked the 10th day of the next month, which, I was informed by my friend, was an invitation to a

* The servant whose business it is to proclaim the titles of any great personage.

rout; that is to say, an entertainment, where a vast number of rational, wise, and well informed votaries of immortality, meet together, not to converse, but to look at each other, and to turn over the bits of painted paper, called cards! After receiving this mark of her Ladyship's attention, we took our leave and retired.

I was curious to know some further particulars of a family whose manners appeared to me so peculiar; and Doctor Severan, whom I have the happiness of seeing every day, has had the goodness amply to gratify my curiosity. He began with observing, that "to those who take pleasure in investigating the phænomena that fall under their observation, either mental or material, it is not sufficient to say that things are so, they must develope the causes in which they have originated. As there are few substances found in a natural state, whose constituent parts cannot be separated from each other by the methods used in chemistry, so there are few predominant

dispositions of the mind which may not be analyzed and traced through their origin and progress by any one who will give himself the trouble to pursue the necessary process.

"This investigation, if accurately followed," continued my friend, "will invariably lead us to the *early education* of the object of it. In *it* we will commonly find an explanation of the manner in which the peculiar combination of ideas that ultimately forms character, has been produced; to it, therefore, we must always recur in our analization of the propensities and conduct of any individual.

"The father of Sir Caprice was three times married.—His first wife, who was the heiress of a wealthy family, died soon after the birth of a daughter, in whom the fortunes of her family are at present centered. —His second wife, the mother of Sir Caprice, brought him no other dower besides beauty and good temper. Her premature death overwhelmed him in affliction; but,

happily, just as he was erecting a monument to her memory, in the inscription of which he gave notice to the world that his affections were for ever buried in her tomb, a consoling angel appeared to comfort him in the shape of Lady Caroline Beaumont.

"This Lady, who brought him only one daughter, proved an excellent wife, and would have been one of the best of mothers to his children, but for a certain timidity of temper, which restrained her from exerting authority over the children of another. From her, therefore, they met with unlimited indulgence, that most powerful inflamer of the passions, in whose high temperature fortitude is lost, and selfishness, arrogance, and pride, are inseparably united.

"Their father having a dislike to publick schools, and resolving that his daughter should share the advantages of a classical education with his son, provided them with a tutor at home—the reverend Mr. Ergo. Well do I remember him. He afterwards got the living of our parish, and used to

stuff his sermons with Greek and Hebrew in such a manner as to make the poor people stare at the depth of his knowledge. In truth, he was a most profound linguist, a complete walking vocabulary;—but of every virtue that dilates the heart, of every science that expands the soul while it enlarges the understanding, he was completely ignorant. The highest idea he could form of the efforts of human intellect, was confined to an accurate knowledge of nouns, verbs, cases, and tenses; and to commit these to the memory of his pupils was the chief object of his solicitude. Unqualified to fix the generous principle in the ductile bosom, he attended not to the development of mind, but, on the contrary, extoled as marks of genius the early whims and caprices of his pupil, which were, in reality, the ebullitions of an unregulated imagination.

"It is, perhaps, to this want of judgment in the tutor, that the extraordinary degree of ardour and unsteadiness, which has distinguished the baronet, may, in some degree,

be attributed. A recital of the various and opposite pursuits, in which he has been at different times engaged, will be the best illustration I can give you of his character, which is such an one as, I suppose, your eastern world has never produced. He is, however, by no means an unique in this part of the world, where the liberty of committing every folly that suggests itself to the fancy is considered as the most glorious privilege.

"The ardour of Sir Caprice's mind," continued my friend, "was, for the first two years after his father's death, expended upon running horses; at length, finding himself *taken in* by his compeers of the turf, cheated by his grooms, and most frequently distanced at the post, he sold his racers, and foreswore Newmarket for ever."

Here I was obliged to beg an explanation from the philosopher, and found that it is customary for the great men in this kingdom, in their exertion of the privilege hinted at above, to expend immense sums of

money on a very beautiful, though useless, species of horses. These animals are, however, doomed to experience the effects of the capricious humours of their masters. At one time they are considered as the dearest friends and most loved companions of their lords, who are never so happy as when in the apartments of their four-legged favourites. While this fit of fondness lasts, they are attended by numerous servants, who, taking consequence from the dignity of their employment, are at once the most insolent and most rapacious of the domestick tribe. Some of these are employed in rubbing the skins of the horses into a beautiful polish, while others serve them with the choicest food. Nay, so far does their care extend, that, as if the clothing of nature were not sufficient, they provide them with woolen garments which completely cover their whole bodies. Will not Maandaara think that the truth hath forsaken his friend, when I say, that the tormenting of these unfortunate favourites forms one

of the chief amusements of the English nobility? But so it is;—at certain appointed periods, they are brought out in the midst of a concourse of spectators, stripped of their fine clothing, and forced to gallop round a certain piece of ground full speed, while for the amusement of their cruel masters they are whipped and even goaded by sharp instruments of steel until the blood flows in streams from their lacerated bodies, and this is called sport!—But to return to Sir Caprice Ardent. If I rightly remember, the next pursuit upon which, according to Doctor Severan's account, he employed the vigour of his mind, was hunting. Here are no jungles in which to pursue the ferocious tyrants of the forest. Here, courage is not called forth in the attack of the wild elephant, or the roaring lion. Nor is activity and watchfulness necessary to guard against the sudden spring of the carnage loving tyger. The pursuit of a small animal, called a fox, employs the vigour of the English hunters. The mis-

chief which the Philosopher informed me was done by Sir Caprice and his friends, in pursuit of this little animal, I confess, appeared to me altogether unaccountable. He mentioned their having spoiled fifteen farms by breaking down the fences, and that a young wood, of great extent, which had been planted by his father, was, by the advice of one of the companions of Sir Caprice, in order to give free scope to the magnanimous pursuers of the red fugitive, burned to the ground. Another consequence of this diversion was to me, equally incomprehensible. Notwithstanding the coldness of the climate, it seems to be productive of the most astonishing degree of thirst. The sum of money which, according to the calculation of Doctor Severan, was expended by Sir Caprice on the wine gulped down by his companions of the chace, would, if it had been employed in improving the uncultivated parts of his estate, have been sufficient to have made the barren wilderness a garden of delights.

"Next to hunting," said Doctor Severan, "succeeded the love of equipage and fine clothes. It was now the ambition of the Baronet's heart to attract the attention of the ladies. His ambition was, perhaps, in no other pursuit of his life, so fully gratified. Wherever he appeared, his exquisite taste was the object of unbounded admiration.

"To have a wife whose beauty would justify the opinion entertained of his taste, and who would likewise give him a new opportunity of displaying it in the choice of female ornaments, now engrossed his cares. Such a one he soon met with. You have seen his Lady. She is what is commonly called, *one of the best of women.* To an evenness of temper, flowing from insensibility, she adds a strict observance of all the rules of politeness and good breeding, taught by that sort of education given at modern boarding schools; which being directed to unessential forms, and useless accomplishments, renders the character cold and artificial. Though incapable of generous friend-

ship, or heart warming affection, she is never deficient in the external ceremonials of respect; and though she never did a kind or good-natured thing in her life, the low temperature of her passions assists her in preserving that semblance of placidity, often very improperly called *sweetness*, which at all times appears in her countenance.

"With a better understanding, she might, perhaps, have directed the effervescence of her husband's disposition to some useful purpose, and restrained it within the limits of common sense. As it is, she contents herself, if, by the assistance of a *little* cunning, in which women of this class of intellect are never deficient, she can work out any *little* end to which her *little* selfish mind inclines her.

"It would be too tedious," continued Severan, "to follow the Baronet through all the various whims and fancies in which his restless spirits have discharged themselves.

"The only period in which I ever knew reading to occupy much of his time, was

soon after his marriage, when he took to studying books of education; and had actually from these composed a Treatise for the instruction of his expected heir; which, however, was forgotten before the child had learned to speak, for then he had turned *improver*.

"It was then that the fine grove of oaks and chesnuts, the massy richness of whose foliage served equally to shelter and adorn his stately mansion, was levelled to the ground, and every spot within sight of the windows metamorphosed into 'a dry smooth shaven green,' awkwardly sprinkled with knarled saplings and ill-formed clumps of shrubbery. How far this spirit of improvement might have led him it is impossible to conjecture, for it was still at its height, when a piece of silver ore, found by one of the workmen in digging a canal intended to meander through the grounds, gave a new object to his ever ardent mind.

"For three sleepless nights his fancy revelled in all the riches of Peru. Miners

were brought from various parts of the kingdom, and the greatest encouragement offered to those who should be successful in discovering the vein, of the existence of which he could not entertain a doubt. Huge excavations were made in various directions, all begun in hope and ending in disappointments; the miners strictly followed the usual example of our British ministers of state; who, when they have plunged the nation into an unnecessary and unsuccessful war, take care, when the account of defeats comes from one quarter, to amuse the attention of the publick with the prospect of better success in another; and Sir Caprice, like the honest British people, was too willing to be deceived to suffer himself to discover the trick. At length, finding his miners grow rich in proportion as he grew poor, his patience became entirely exhausted; and with many execrations on their knavery and his own folly, he suddenly dismissed them all, and set himself diligently to re-

pair the devastations they had committed on the face of his estate. It was this circumstance which, perhaps, turned his thoughts to agriculture, which, as he contrived to manage it, was as unproductive a folly as any in which he has ever yet engaged. With such avidity, however, did he enter into it, that I well remember him walking about the fields with a silver spoon in his hand, to taste the different composts, into the specifick qualities of which he thought it necessary to examine; and, ignorant of chemical process, he trusted to his palate for a discovery of the acids or akalis they contained. It would seem that in this particular it had proved a deceitful guide;—for notwithstanding his delicacy of taste, and although he had laid out his fields in the best method that the best theoretical writers had pointed out, he had the worst crops that were known in the country; he was, at length, contented to replace the old tenants in their farms; and finding his estate considerably incumbered by his various schemes

of fortune-making (avarice having now become the passion which chiefly predominated in his heart) he resolved for a few years to try the economical plan of travelling. He accordingly set out for the continent with his Lady, leaving his eldest daughter at the most fashionable boarding-school in London; his second, who had been adopted from the hour of her birth by his sister, Miss Ardent, remained with her; and the youngest had the happiness of being received under the roof of her excellent aunt, lady Grey.

"Sir Caprice Ardent and his lady remained abroad for six years, in the course of which period his lady brought him three sons; only one of whom survives; a poor puny boy, so completely spoiled by indulgence that there is no bearing his petulance and prate. During the residence of our Baronet in Italy, he gave sufficient proofs to his friends that the change of atmosphere had no effect on the temperament of his mind. Antiques, musick, pictures, statues, intaglios, and even butterflies, were, in

their turns, the exclusive objects of his attention. The death of a relation, who bequeathed him a large legacy, brought him at length back to his country, just as the rage for building had begun to occupy his mind. With its effects, you are sufficiently acquainted; and you will, probably, before the conclusion of the summer, see it give place to some other absurdity, which will be entered on with equal ardour, managed with equal skill, and ultimately abandoned with equal facility."

Alas! cried I, I find that folly is a plant which flourishes in every clime; it only differs in the colouring. But if it is not intruding too far upon your time and patience, I should be glad to know what hue it assumed in the young Lady who was educated by the same tutor.

My friend willingly gratified my curiosity, and thus proceeded:

"To the eldest sister of Sir Caprice, who inherited from Nature a stronger intellect and quicker perception than her brother, the

tuition of Doctor Ergo was attended with more beneficial consequences. The ancient authors, whose works were by him put into her hands merely as exercises in the dead languages, attracted her attention. She acquired a taste for their beauties, and soon became so addicted to reading, as, at an early period of life, rendered her mistress of an extensive degree of information. But, alas! it is not merely a knowledge of the facts contained in history, nor a relish for the beauties of poetick imagery, nor a superficial acquaintance with any branch of science, that can effectually expand the powers of the human mind. For that great end the judgment must be qualified to apply them to useful purposes. It was this deficiency which led Miss Ardent to value her accidental attainments at so high a rate, as to make her despise not only the weaknesses but even the domestick virtues of her own sex. Their occupations and amusements she treated with the utmost contempt, and thought that in this contempt she gave the

surest proof of the superiority of her own *masculine understanding*.

"From her mind, though the particles of vanity were not expelled, they assumed a new form—instead of the attention to external beauty, feminine graces, and elegant manners, the vanity of Miss Ardent appeared in an affectation of originality of sentiment and intrepid singularity of conduct. In support of this character, she altogether loses sight of her own, which is naturally gentle and benevolent; and enforces her opinions in so dictatorial a manner, as renders her equally the object of dread and dislike to the generality of her acquaintance. And, indeed, it must be acknowledged, that this accomplished woman, in her eagerness to display the strength of her mind, too often lays aside that outer robe of delicacy, which is not only the ornament but the armour of female virtue; and that she never attempts to shine, without exciting the alternate emotions of admiration and disgust." Good heaven, exclaimed I, and is

this the consequence of female learning? is the mind of woman *really* formed of such weak materials that as soon as it emerges from ignorance it must necessarily become intoxicated with the fumes of vanity and conceit? "And did your highness never see a *male* pedant?" replied the philosopher. "Did you never behold a man destitute of early education, and confined to the society of ignorant and illiterate people, who had by some chance acquired a knowledge of books; and did he not appear as proud of his superiour information, as ridiculously vain, as arrogant, as ostentatious and conceited, as any learned lady that ever lived? or, if a more phlegmatick temper prevented the effervescence of vanity from displaying itself in the same manner, it is ten to one that he was still more insufferable by his dogmatick pedanty and supercilious-ness. The reason why such characters are not so frequently to be met with amongst men, is, that (in this country at least) the education of boys is, in some degree, calcu-

lated to open and gradually to prepare the mind for the reception of knowledge; that of girls, on the contrary, is from their very cradles inimical to the cultivation of any one rational idea.

"In the mental as in the material world, similar causes will ever produce similar effects; let the combination of ideas be attended to from the earliest period of life; let the mind be early taught to think; taught to form a just estimate of the objects within the reach of its observation; and appreciating every thing by its usefulness, led to see, that *genius is less valuable than virtue*, and that the knowledge of every science and the attainment of every accomplishment sinks into insignificance, when compared to the uniform performance of any known duty. Will the mind, whether it belongs to male or female, that is thus prepared, be elated into arrogance by learning the opinions of the people of different ages, even though taught to read them in the language in which they were originally written? Will it become less modest, less amiable, less engaging, for

having been enlarged by this extent of information, or will it be less qualified for the performance of social duties, because it has been freed from the prejudices of ignorance, and taught to fill its place in the scale of rational beings? Surely no; I need only mention the name of Lady Grey to give the fullest proof of the justness of my assertion. This young sister of the Ardents had, under the care of a mother eminently qualified for the task, the advantage of just such an education as I have described; but though to all the understanding and accomplishments of her sister, she adds that brilliancy of imagination of which the value is so apt to be over estimated by its possessors, she is neither vain, ostentatious, nor assuming. Accustomed to compare her actions, not with the trifiers around her, but with the pure standard of Christian excellence, her virtues are all genuine. For instance, the quality of gentleness, which in woman is seldom more than a passive tameness of spirit that yields without struggling to the

encroachments of the turbulent and unworthy, is, in her, the spontaneous offspring of true humility; it is the transcript of that wisdom which is from above, pure, and peaceable, and lovely!—Modesty is not in her the affectation of squeamish delicacy—it is the purity of the heart. Maternal fondness (and never was the heart of a mother more tenderly affectionate) is, like every other affection of her soul, put under the control of reason. That blind indulgence, which would be prejudicial to the real interest of its object, is, by her, considered as a selfish gratification, not to be enjoyed but at the expense of the future happiness of her child; it is therefore wisely restrained, though sometimes at the expense of present feeling. Such tenderness, directed by such wisdom, is the nearest possible imitation of the most amiable attributes of the divinity!—And who would put such a woman as this in comparison with the most beautiful piece of insipid ignorance that ever opened its eyes upon the world? Is there a man who would

prefer the vapid chatter of a pretty ideot to the conversation of such a woman? So good! so wise! so beautiful! Yes, my noble Rajah, she is still beautiful! though her eyes have lost somewhat of that lustre which but a few years ago was the admiration of all beholders, they still beam with animation and sensibility." Ah! my friend, cried I, you need say little to persuade me of her beauty; the accomplishments and virtues of an ugly woman can make little impression even on the mind of a philosopher.—My friend coloured, but before he could reply, a loud explosion from the further end of the room burst upon our ears and filled us with momentary terrour. In discoursing on Lady Grey, my friend had forgotten the necessary management of a retort, which, for want of his attention, burst in pieces. I know not what were its contents, but they sent forth such suffocating effluvia, as, had I not been restrained by politeness, would quickly have driven me from the room.

When the smoke which followed the explosion was somewhat dissipated, I observed my friend standing in a melancholy posture, with clasped hands and fixed eyes, ruminating on the misfortune that had befallen him. A course of experiments, the labour of many weeks, were by this unhappy accident rendered abortive; it was a subject that could not immediately admit of consolation. I therefore, for some time, preserved the strictest silence. Just as I was about to open my lips with the voice of sympathy, the Philosopher, who had never lifted his eyes from the remains of the broken vessel, suddenly clapping his hands together, exclaimed, in a transport of ecstacy, "I see it! I see it!—Heavens! what a discovery!—Never was there so fortunate an accident!" I was at first somewhat afraid that my friend's senses had received a shock from this alarming incident; but was happily relieved from my apprehensions, on being informed that the appearances which the matter, contained in the retort, had assumed on its explosion,

gave a hint to the Philosopher for the explanation of some phænomena hitherto unaccounted for. In a moment, that fine countenance (and never did Brama bestow upon a human soul an index so intelligible) which had been so lately shaded by the cloud of despondency, was brightened by the emanations of joy, and irradiated by the smile of exultation and delight. I was not sufficiently initiated in science to be able to appreciate the value of the discovery which gave such ecstatick pleasure to the mind of the Philosopher, but contemplated with rapture the wisdom of the immortal spirit, who, when he spread the volume of Nature before his rational offspring, passed this unalterable decree: "That to the mind, devoted to its perusal, the corrosive passions should be unknown. That it should have power to assuage the tumults of the soul; to foster the emotions of virtue; and to produce a species of enjoyment peculiarly its own!"—Such, O! Maandaara! such are the advantages of science!!

ACCORDING to appointment, I went, a few evenings ago, to Lady Ardent's rout. Doctor Severan had the goodness to accompany me; a piece of condesension, which, now that I know what sort of a thing a rout is, I cannot but consider as a very distinguished compliment.

A rout is a species of penance, of which the pious Yogees of Hindostan never conceived an idea; if these people were not the professors of a religion which prohibits the worship of the inferiour deities, I should say, it was a sacrifice to the Goddess of Fashion; a sacrifice not of the joint of a finger, or a toe, as we are here told it is the custom to present to that Goddess in some newly discovered countries,* but of every

* It is supposed by the Translator, that the Rajah here alludes to a custom said to be practised in Otaheite. See Cook's Voyages.

faculty of the soul that distinguishes the rational from the brute creation. These remain during the ceremony of the rout in an absolute state of suspension. You may imagine, my dear Maandaara, what a sacrifice this must be—to people possessed of so much wisdom, and who are so eminently qualified for the pleasures of conversation. What a sacrifice! to be deprived of the interchange of ideas, of every communication of sentiment and every advantage of understanding, and to be doomed to sit stiffling in a crowded room, during the length of an evening, with no other employment than that of turning over little bits of painted paper!

It is not surprising, that in such circumstances the countenances of these votaries of fashion should so frequently be distinguished by the insipid stare of vacancy, or the lowering frown of discontent. For my part I could not help pitying them from my very soul; I was particularly concerned for a group of young females, who were placed on a sopha in a corner of the room, and

who, instead of cards, held each in their hand a small fan, which they from time to time opened and again shut in a very melancholy manner. As I contemplated their situation with much compassion, wondering whether silence had actually been imposed upon them as one of the duties of the ceremony, my feelings were effectually relieved by the entrance of three effeminate-looking youths, dressed in the military habit, whose pale faces and puny figures rendered it a matter of doubt to which sex they actually belonged, till one of them being saluted *Lord* relived me from the dilemma. Whether there was any thing exhilarating in the perfumes which these Saibs had plentifully bestowed upon their persons, I know not; but their appearance seemed to spread a sudden ray of animation over the dejected Bibbys, who in a moment began to speak to each other with wonderful loquacity; the fans were opened and shut with encreasing celerity. The Chouries upon their heads were with one consent put into motion, waving like

the graceful plumage of the Auney* when it carries the messages of Camdeo; and their eyes, which had hitherto rolled with languid vacuity from one head-dress to another, now turned their glances towards that part of the room were the lady-like gentlemen stood. Two of these heroes, with a degree of fortitude to which many more gallant-looking men would have been unequal, turning their backs upon the fair creatures who so sweetly solicited their attention, sat down at a card-table, each placing himself opposite to a wrinkled Bibby old enough to be his grandmother. The young Lord, either possessing less resolution than his companions, or, not considering this sort of penance necessary for the good of his soul, joined himself to the fan-playing party of the young ladies.—Dulness and melancholy vanished at his approach; every word he uttered produced a simper on the pretty faces of his female audience; the simper, at length, en-

* A fabulous bird, frequently mentioned by the Poets of India as the ambassador of love.

creased into a tittering laugh. Observing that they cast their eyes to the opposite side of the appartment, I judged it was some object placed there that excited their risibility; following the direction of their glances, I perceived a lady with a remarkably pleasant countenance, who had indeed no chourie upon her head, and who was in every particular less disfigured by dress than any other person in the room. I was pondering in my own mind how this modest and unassuming personage could excite the risibility of the fair group, when a Lady who had for some time stood near them, apparently engaged in over-looking a card-table, turned round, and addressed them in the following manner: "When you, my Lord and Ladies, have sufficiently amused yourselves in ridiculing the dress of that excellent woman, I hope you will next proceed to her character. You cannot do better than compare it with you own. I do assure you, her dress is not so widely different from your's as the furniture of either her head or heart. That

very woman, with her flat cap and plain petticoat, has an understanding of the first quality, and a heart replete with every virtue. While she has been cultivating the one and exercising the other in the noblest manner, be so good as to ask yourselves how you have been employed? but, perhaps your observations, like those of a monkey, can go no farther than the ornaments of the person? Then, poor things! who can blame you for exercising the highest of your intellectual powers; and for asserting your claim to rationality, though even by the lowest and most equivocal of its characteristicks?"—You have beheld a flock of Paroquets basking themselves in the rays of the sun, all exerting their little throats and squalling and chattering with all their might: when, lo! a Cormorant or other bird of prey has made its appearance, and in a moment the clamorous voices of the little green-robed chatterers has been hushed in silence—becoming as mute as the vegetable tribe under whose friendly leaves they sought for shelter.

Such was the effect produced upon the pretty group of Bibbers by this unexpected harangue; and, I confess, I participated so much in their feelings, that I was not a little alarmed when the orator, turning with a look of ineffable contempt from her dismayed auditors, addressed herself to me.—Nor did it greatly tend to relieve me, when I discovered that it was *Miss Ardent*, who thus did me the honour of introducing herself to my acquaintance. My friend, the Philosopher, had said enough to frighten me at the idea of holding any communication with *a learned Lady*. I found her, however, not quite so formidable as I had at first apprehended. She, indeed, soon found means not only to reconcile me to her company, but to render it quite charming. She directed the conversation to the delightful subject of my dear native country! at her desire, I described to her the peculiar charms of the blooming landscape, whose exhilarating beauties gladden the hearts of the happy inhabitants of Almora. I painted to her

imagination the immeasureable forest, whose trees have their sky-touching heads overshadowed by the venerable mountains of Cummow : I talked of the thundering torrents which are dashed from the stupendous rocks, and which, delighted at their escape from the frozen North, run to hide themselves in the bosom of the Ganga. I told her of the names which they assumed upon their route, expatiated on the charming banks which adorned the course of the rapid Gumtry, and of the playful meanderings of the Gurra. I had likewise the honour of explaining to her the present political state of the country ; it is a subject upon which, since I have been in England, I have seldom had any opportunity, and still seldomer any satisfaction in conversing. In all that relates to our country, I have indeed found these western lovers of science most deplorably ignorant. You may believe it impressed me with a very high idea of the superiour powers of Miss Ardent's mind, when I found that she had particular atten-

tion to every thing connected with the history or literature of India. But even Miss Ardent has her prejudices, and I did not find it a very easy matter to convince her that the Mahhabaret was superiour to the Iliad of Homer: or that Calidas was a dramatick Poet equal in excellence to Shakspeare. You will smile at her prejudices; but consider, my dear friend, what you would think of the arrogance of any foreigner, who should have the presumption to put the works of his countrymen in competition with those divine Bards, and you will learn to make allowances for this Lady. She was surprised to hear that I had not yet been to see the representation of an English Natack, here called a play, and invited me to be of her party to see the performance of one the following evening. I was charmed with the invitation; and did not fail in my attendance on the letter-loving Bibby at the time appointed.

The building appropriated to this amusement belongs to the King, and is called his

Theatre; and to it he sends his servants for the diversion of the publick. They are not, however, paid by their Master, but, like all the servants of the English nobility, are paid *by the visitors*. Nor are they so modest as some that I have seen at the royal palaces and gardens, who never asked for their wages until they had gratified my curiosity; but these stipulated for a certain sum, and demanded it before they permitted me to enter.

My expectations in respect to the magnificence of the building and the splendour of its decorations were somewhat disappointed: but upon the whole it is very well contrived for seeing and hearing the performers. —In front of the stage is an aisle larger than that in the church, in which the people are, however, treated with more respect, being all accommodated with seats: and I could perceive that *here* their marked approbation of any passage excited some degree of attention in the great people who sat in the little pews above them: and although

among these great people some appeared to regard the Natack as little as the sermon, talking and whispering almost as much at the theatre as they had done in church; yet the performance was here, in general, much better attended to by all who had the enjoyment of their senses.—You will think this a strange exception—but you must know, that a part of the royal theatre is peculiarly appropriated to the reception of a species of lunaticks, called Bucks, who are indeed very noisy and troublesome; but who are treated with an amazing degree of lenity and forbearance by the benevolent people, who bestow upon them the pity that is due to their unhappy situation.

Great part of the entertainment seemed, indeed, calculated for their amusement, as it is well known that the eye can be gratified by the display of gaudy colours, even where the mind is destitute of the gift of reason. This respect to folly was, however, in my opinion, carried too far; and though I should have been well pleased to

have seen the grown children amused by the exhibition of a few showy pictures and other mummery, I could not approve of turning the infirmities of old age into ridicule for their amusement. I had foolishly thought that all English plays were like the plays of Shakspeare; but, alas! I begin to apprehend that they are not all quite so good! instead of those portraits of the passions, which Nature spontaneously acknowledges for her own, I only see exaggerated representations of transient and incidental folly. Whether it be owing to the peculiar taste of the exalted Omrah, whose office it is to examine the merits of the Natacks that are performed by his Majesty's servants, or to the limited genius of modern Poets, I know not; but it appears evident that all dramatick writers in this country are now confined to one plot: A foolish old man devoted to avarice, has a daughter that is petulant and disobedient, or a son of the same character; perhaps two or three of these old men, differing from each other in the size

and shape of the covering of the head called Wigs, are brought into the same piece, together with an old unmarried sister, who always believes herself to be young and handsome. After the young people have for some time exercised their ingenuity in deceiving the vigilance of the old ones, and have successfully exposed to publick ridicule the bodily infirmities and mental failings of their several parents, they are paired for marriage, and thus the piece concludes. This composition is called a *Sentimental Comedy*, and is succeeded by what is termed a Farce. In the Farce, his Majesty's servants make faces, and perform many droll tricks for the diversion of the audience, who seem particularly pleased with their exertions in this way, which they applaud with repeated peals of laughter.—And, surely, it must be highly gratifying to the imperial mind, to see the people pleased at so cheap a rate.

The first time I went to the theatre was, as I have already informed you, in company

with Miss Ardent, who was much disappointed that the illness of the royal servants should have prevented the representation of a new piece, written by an English officer in the service of the East India Company, which, in the opinion of this Lady, is a piece of much intrinsick merit. It is taken from the history of Zingis, and adorned with the terror-striking spirit of Zamouca, which blazes throughout the whole of the performance; to me, I must confess, the presentation of such a piece would have been more charming than either the lesson of morality given in the sentimental comedy, or the fooleries of the farce; but I was informed by Miss Ardent, that I must be cautious how I give utterance to such an opinion, as nothing is now deemed so barbarous as the energy of good sense.—"If your highness would have the people of this country," continued she, "entertain a good idea of your taste, you must give all your admiration to hollow but high-sounding sentiment. Sentiment and sing-song are the fashion of

the day. That it is so, we are much indebted to the care and talents of our modern Bards, who by such compositions as the present spoil and contaminate the national taste." "Pardon me," cried a gentleman who stood by, "but in my opinion, the stage does not so much form, as *reflect* the national taste. Poetry has always reached her maturity, while her votaries were in a semi-barbarous state: with the progress of civilization, she has gradually declined; and if we take the rapidity of her decay in this country as the criterion of our refinement, we may proudly pronounce ourselves one of the most polished nations of the earth!"—Miss Ardent's carriage being announced, put an end to the conversation; but before she stept into it, she invited me to dine with her on the following day. "What!" you will say, "a single, unprotected woman, invite you to her house?—Shameful violation of decorum!"—But consider, my friend—custom, that mighty legislator, who issues the laws of propriety to the different nations

of the earth, maketh that appear amiable and proper in the eyes of the people of one country, which in those of another is criminal and absurd: and so easily doth custom reconcile us to her capricious decrees, that I received the invitation and went to the house of Miss Ardent with as little perturbation as if she had been a gentleman in petticoats.

She received me in an apartment devoted to literature and contemplation, from which it takes the name of *study;* the walls of the room were lined with books, all shining in coats of glossy leather, richly ornamented with leaf of gold. That pains which in Asia is bestowed in decorating the illuminated page, being in England all given to the outside covering, which, it must be confessed, gives to the study a very splendid appearance.

Two gentleman had arrived before me, and were already engaged in conversation. —These, as Miss Ardent informed me in a whisper, were great *Criticks.* The word

was new to me, and I did not choose to ask for an explanation, but seeing a huge book upon the table which I knew to be an explainer of hard words, I had immediate recourse to it, and found a Critick to be "*a man skilled in the art of judging of literature.*" What information might I not expect to receive from such infallible judges, who, as the subsequent description informed me, must be qualified "*nicely to discriminate, and ably to judge, the beauties and faults of writings.*"—The name of a great author, whose works I had read with satisfaction and delight, met my ear, and the fire of expectation was instantly kindled in my bosom. Conscious that I could only skim the surface of that ocean of wisdom contained in the work of this great moralist, I now hoped to see such hidden gems produced to view as had escaped my feeble search; but judge of my mortification, at being informed only of the size of his wig! Both the criticks produced a thousand little instances of the oddities of his manner, the

peculiarity of his dress, and the irritability of his temper. But as to the excellence of his precepts, the strength of his arguments, or the sublimity of his sentiments—the criticks said not a word!

The name of this author led to that of another—a Poet to whose verses Miss Ardent gave the epithet of *charming*. Her learned guests, though in general obsequiously submissive to her opinion, did not, in this instance, seem to coincide with her.—But, instead of pointing out the defects of his composition, they only mentioned the badness of his taste, of which they gave an irrefragable proof in his preferring *a roasted* potatoe to a chesnut!—Miss Ardent, who did not seem pleased at having the taste of her favourite poet called in question, abruptly turned the conversation, and addressing herself to me, told me she should soon have the pleasure of introducing me to some gentlemen of distinguished talents and acknowledged merit, whose names I had probably heard.—She then mentioned three

of the most celebrated writers of the present day, every one of whose works I had had the advantage of reading with Delomond in the course of our voyage. While she yet spoke, the Chubdar re-echoed the names of these celebrated men; they entered, and paid the tribute of respect to this patroness of science, who, when she was seated among them, appeared in my eyes like the Goddess Serreswatti surrounded by the gems of the court of Vicramaditya.

Think, Maandaara! think what I must have felt at the sight of four live authors! You may well believe, that I could not find myself in the immediate presence of so many learned personages without experiencing a considerable degree of agitation. I remained immersed in silent awe and breathless expectation. Surely, said I to myself, the conversation of men who are capable of writing books must be very different from that of common mortals!

One of them opened his mouth—I listened with avidity—and heard—that the morn-

ing had been remarkably rainy.—How beautiful is this condescension, said I again to myself, in one so wise!—The Chubdar again entered, it was to announce that the dinner was upon the table. I followed Miss Ardent and her learned guests into the apartment destined for this repast, where, according to the barbarous custom of the country, they sat down to eat at one table, and confined their conversation while they remained at it to eulogiums on the good things set before them, of which, in compliment (no doubt) to the mistress of the feast, they devoured a goodly quantity. While they were thus employed, I retired to a sopha at the other end of the room, where I contemplated with astonishment how much men of genius could eat. At length, the long-protracted feast was finished, the mangled remains of the bipeds and the quadrupeds, the fishes of the sea, the vegetables of the earth, and the golden fruits of the garden, were carried off by the domesticks; a variety of wines supplied their places upon the

table—the liquid ruby flowed, and these disciples of the poet of Shiraz seemed to unite with him in regard to the sovereign efficacy of the sparkling contents* of the goblet.

* The allusion is taken from one of the odes of Hafiz, which, as it does not appear among those selected by Mr. Nott, for his very elegant Translation, we think the following LITERAL one may not prove unacceptable:

1. The season of spring is arrived, let the sparkling goblet go round!
2. Seize, O ye youths, the fleeting hour, and enjoy the extatick delight of the company of the fawn-eyed daughters of love.
3. Boy! fill out the wine, and let the liquid ruby flow, for it is it alone that poureth the oil of gladness into the hearts of the unfortunate, and is the healing balm of the wounds of the afflicted.
4. Leave the corroding thorns of worldly cares, and the anxiety of ambition, to immortalize the names of Cyrus and Alexander.
5. Let me indulge in my favourite wine, and see which of us shall soonest obtain the object of his desires.
6. Let mine ear listen to the melody of the lute and the cymbal, and mine eyes be charmed with the fair daughters of Circassia.
7. Go, O my soul, and give thyself to joy, for it is needless to anticipate to-day the sorrows of to-morrow.

So much has been said and sung on the inspiring powers of wine, that I anxiously watched its effects on these men of learning. —But, unfortunately for wit and me, no sooner were the bottles set upon the table, than the subject of politicks was introduced: a subject which to me is ever dull and barren of delight. To Miss Ardent it appeared otherwise; she entered with warmth and energy into the discussion, and spoke of ministers and their measures, of the management of wars, and the interests of nations, in such a decisive manner, as proved her qualified to become the Vizir of an Empire.

Not seeing the conversation likely to take a turn to any other subject, and considering that the presence of a stranger might throw some restraint on the discussion of affairs of state, I took my leave; and must confess, that I returned from this banquet of reason not altogether satisfied with my entertainment.

As after having lost a game at Chess, it is my custom to ponder on the past moves, until I find out the false step that led to my defeat, so do I ruminate on the disappointment of expected felicity, till I make a discovery of the source from which it has flowed. In doing so, I am almost always certain of seeing it traced to the fallacy of ill-grounded expectation. Why, said I, should I have expected more from an author than from any other man of sense? When a man has given his thoughts a form upon paper, and submitted them in that shape to the perusal of the world, is he from thenceforth to be obliged to speak in laboured sentences, and to utter only the aphorisms of wisdom? Carrying my reasonings upon this subject a little farther, I was almost tempted to conclude, that the manners of even a female author might not differ much from that of other women!—but this, you will think, was carrying the matter rather too far.

THE amiable, the engaging Delomond has this morning left us. His departure is like a dark cloud, which in early spring deforms the face of nature and checks the gayety of the season with the sudden chill of a wintery storm. It has particularly affected me, as it has at once shut the prospect of prosperity, which, as I had flattered myself, was fast opening on my friend, and deprived me of the sunshine of his presence. But perhaps my disappointment with regard to the success of Delomond is more in proportion to the eagerness of my wishes than to the solidity of my hope. The mind which, like the delicate leaves of the Mimosa, shrinks from every touch, is ill calculated to solicit the assistance of the powerful, or gain the favour of the great. The very looks of the prosperous it construes into arrogance; and is equally wounded by the civility which appears to condescend, and by the insolence which wears the form of contempt.

From all these multiplied mortifications, some perhaps real, and some only imaginary,

has Delomond hastily retired; and relinquishing the pursuit of fortune and the pleasures of society, devotes his future life to the indolent repose of obscurity. But, alas! how shall he, who was discomfited by the first thorny branch which hung across the path of fortune, struggle through the sharp briers of adversity?—Can a mind, formed for the happiness of domestick life, endowed with such exquisite relish for the refined enjoyment of taste and sentiment, find comfort in a joyless state of solitude; or, what is worse than solitude, the company of the rude and ignorant?—Ah! my amiable friend, thou wilt find, when it is too late, that the road to happiness is not to be entered by the gate of fastidious refinement.

The first care that occupied my mind, after my arrival in London, was, to procure a safe conveyance for the presents which I

had intended to lay at the feet of the sister of Percy.

I have just received an answer to the letter that accompanied them.—It is such as I should have expected from her who was worthy the esteem of such a brother. But, alas! it is written with the pen of sorrow, and blotted by the tears of affliction. The amiable old man, who supplied to her the place of a father, who loved her with such tenderness, and was beloved by her with such a degree of filial affection, is gone to the dark mansions of death. She has left the happy abode of her infancy, and her dwelling is now among strangers.—This she particularly deplores, on account of depriving her of the power of shewing the sense she entertains of my friendship to her brother in any other way than by words alone. Her expressions of gratitude have the energetick eloquence of genuine sensibility; they are greatly beyond what I have merited; but, when I consider the tender

reflections that excited them, my heart melts into sympathy.

Alas! it is easy to perceive, that this amiable young woman is not to be numbered with the happy. Perhaps her present situation is peculiarly unfortunate. Perhaps she has there been destined to experience the cold reception, the unfeeling neglect, of some little, narrow, selfish mind, to whose attentions she had been particularly recommended by her departed relatives. Perhaps some friend of her brother.—But no; the *real* friends of Percy were, like himself, noble, generous, and good. Far from being capable of dishonouring the memory of their friend by neglecting to perform the rites of hospitality to his sister, they have taken an interest in her feelings, and by acts of kindness and attention have endeavoured to promote her happiness. And surely for no act of kindness can the sister of Percy be ungrateful to the friends of her brother!

The loss of Delomond, and the melancholy letter of Miss Percy, dwelt upon my

spirits, and sunk them to a state of unusual depression. I spent the night in sadness, and early in the morning went in search of my friend, the philosopher, whose conversation is to me as the rod of Krishna, which no sooner touched the eyes of Arjoon, than he saw the figure of truth, as it appears unto the Gods themselves. This amiable friend had of late been so much engrossed by his scientifick pursuits, that I had enjoyed little of his company. He received me with an air of unusual vivacity. "When I last saw you," said he, "I am afraid I must have appeared strangely inattentive; but, in truth, my mind was at that time very much embarrassed, and almost solely occupied on a subject which I did not then choose to speak of, but which I shall now fully explain. You must know, that I had lately entered on a course of experiments, more interesting than any in which I have ever yet engaged, and from which, I had no doubt, a most important discovery would result. I found it, however, altogether im-

possible to go on without the assistance of an additional apparatus, the price of which was far more than I could afford. It was fifty pounds! Little less than a quarter of a year's rent of my whole estate! What was I to do? bespeak it of the artizan, without having the money ready to pay for it? This would be nothing less than an act of wilful dishonesty, for dishonesty, either to one's self or others, running in debt always is.

"Could I hope to save it by retrenching any of my ordinary expences? I calculated every thing, even to living on bread and water, but found it impossible. I had, then, nothing for it, but to relinquish my plan entirely, and since I could not carry it on myself, to communicate my ideas upon the subject to some more opulent philosopher, by whose means the benefit of the discovery might be still given to the world. "Ah! my friend," interrupted I, "I now see that you have no regard for me, or you would have given me the enviable pleasure, the delight of being able to say to myself, that I

too, ignorant as I am, I too have contributed my feeble aid to the advancement of Science and the benefit of Society." "You are very good," returned the Doctor, "and I have no doubt of your generosity. But as the action of heat evaporates fluids, so does the borrowing of money in my opinion, destroy the independence of the soul: that independence which gives life and energy to virtue, without which it becomes incapable of being exerted to any truly useful purpose. No; what I cannot effect by the means which Divine Providence has put into my power, I think is not intended by Providence that I should effect at all.

"I was therefore quietly employing myself in unfixing that great retort; when this morning a letter was brought me from my agent in the country, informing me of his having obtained for me, from a neighbouring 'Squire, the sum of fifty pounds, for damages done me by taking, through mistake, a piece of my ground into one of his inclosures. Which sum he inclosed to me

in a letter. Thus, you see, my dilemma is quite at an end. I shall now go on with spirit; and as I need lose no more time, I am just going into the city to give the necessary directions to the work-people; who, if they are any way diligent, may have the whole apparatus completely finished in a week." As he spoke, I contemplated with delight the glow of pleasure which animated his finely expressive countenance; a pleasure so different from the sparkling extacy of passion, that merely to have beheld it would have been sufficient to convince the most devoted sensualist of the superiority of *mind* over every enjoyment of mere sense.

Having accepted my offer of attending him, we were just about to depart, when we were prevented by the entrance of a Lady, whose air and manner had in them somewhat so interesting that the unseasonableness of the interrruption was soon forgotten. Grief and anxiety were painted on her countenance. Every feature was labouring with

ill-suppressed emotion, and when she attempted to speak, the tremour of her voice prevented her words from being distinctly heard. I, however, soon gathered from her broken sentences, and the sympathetick replies of the philosopher, that she was the wife of an old school-fellow, one of his early and esteemed friends—that she had been born to affluence, but forfeited the favour of her family by her marriage; her husband having virtue and talents, but no fortune. His talents, however, had been turned to good account; he had employed himself in drawing plans of the estates of the affluent, which his taste taught him to embellish in such a manner as gratified the vanity of his employers by the admiration it excited. He was contented with the profit, while they enjoyed the praise.

"We were doing charmingly," said the Lady, "and had the prospect of soon getting above the world, and paying off all the little debts, which at our first setting out in life necessity had compelled us to contract;

when in the beginning of last Summer my husband was seized with a fever, which lasted seven weeks, and left him so weak that many more elapsed before he was able to go abroad. During that time, he lost some of his most advantageous situations; gentlemen who had employed him having in the time of his illness contracted with others. Winter came on, and no funds were provided against its wants; my husband, whose tenderness and affection for his family seemed to be encreased by the difficulty he found in procuring their support, had a genius fruitful in resources. In those months, when the season necessarily put a stop to his employments, he wrote for the printer of a periodical publication, in which work he taught me to assist him; and thus by our united endeavours we contrived still to keep up a decent appearance, and to maintain with frugality our four little ones, whose innocent endearments repaid all our trouble, and made us when we sat down to our little meal forget the labour by which it had

been earned. Ah! my poor babes! it is your sufferings, that, more than his own, now wrings your father's heart!"

"But where is now my friend?" interrupted Severan. "Is he well? What can I do to serve him? Where can I see him?"

"Alas! he is in prison!" returned the Lady. "He is in a loathsome, dismal prison!—deprived of light, of liberty, of every comfort and enjoyment; and his dear children, his pretty darlings, of whom he used to be so fond, they too must go, must be nursed in the abode of misery, and made familiar with every species of wretchedness!" —Her tears came to her relief, and for sometime choaked her utterance.

At length, recovering herself, and assuming an air of dejected composure, "I beg your pardon," continued she, (observing the marks of sensibility that overspread the benignant countenance of our friend) "I did not mean to distress you, but it is so few that can feel for one's affliction!—and the voice of sympathy is so grateful to

the wounded heart, that I could not deny myself the consolation of speaking to you. But things may yet go better—My husband has enough owing to him to enable him to pay every one. But the misfortune is, that his debtors are all people of fortune, whose favour would be for ever lost by an untimely application for money; and should the news of his having been imprisoned for debt once get abroad, he is ruined for ever! No person of fashion will ever employ him more!"

"I cannot think so," said the Doctor, with his wonted mildness; "we see daily instances of the high favour that is shewn to people of ruined circumstances; many of whom I have known, even when worthless and depraved, to meet with attention and support from people of elevated rank and fashion."

"Ah! Sir," replied the Lady, "these were people who had squandered their fortunes in luxury and dissipation; such, indeed, seldom fail to meet with patrons and benefactors; but it is far otherwise with the

poor man, who has been struggling with adversity and employing his efforts for the maintenance of a virtuous wife and family: when *he* fails, he is considered as an object unworthy of notice; *his* situation creates *no* interest; his wretchedness excites *no* commiseration."—"But your own family, my dear Madam, they have it in their power to extricate you from every difficulty; will you permit me to apply to them in your behalf?"

"Alas! Sir," I fear it would be in vain, "they are too fond of money to give it to those who have none. You know how I offended them by my marriage; yet, had my husband succeeded in the world, and made a fortune, *mine* would not have been withheld from him. It would have been given, if we had not wanted it; but, now that we are reduced to poverty, I have no hopes of assistance from any of my friends. Yet would I thank you for making trial of an application to them if they were in town—but they are not. They are all at

York, except one Aunt, who is, indeed, very rich; she is also very religious and very charitable, but makes it a rule never to give assistance to any who are not of her own sect."

"Then," cried Severan, with unusual warmth, "whatever are her professions, she is a stranger to the religion of Jesus Christ! But you have not told me the amount of the debt for which your husband is confined; is it not considerable?"

"Alas! yes," returned the Lady. "It is more than forty pounds, and what with the bailiff's and the jailor's fees, will I dare say, arise to little less than fifty!"

Fifty pounds!" repeated the philosopher. "And fifty pounds would release your husband from a jail. Fifty pounds would restore a father to his infant family, and make the heart of a virtuous woman rejoice. It is the noblest of all experiments!—And detested be the pursuit that would stand in the way of the happiness of a fellow-creature. My good Madam," continued he, addressing

himself to the Lady, who looked astonished at the incoherence of his expressions, "you must know, that I this morning made a mistake; I thought that Providence had sent me fifty pounds to enable me to pursue a philosophical discovery, on which I had vainly set my heart; but I now find it was for a nobler purpose; it was to contribute to the happiness of an unfortunate family; here it is; and all I desire is, that you would consider me only as the agent, and keep your thanks for him who sent it."

The various emotions of astonishment, doubt, gratitude, and joy, which took possession of the poor Lady's bosom, struggled for utterance, and at length found vent in tears.

The effect upon my feelings was too powerful to be supported. I left the room, and when I returned found my friend advising with the Lady on the steps necessary to be taken for her husband's release. I had from the commencement of our acquaintance regarded the philosopher as the first of

human beings. I now looked up to him as something more. To help a fellow-creature in distress, is the instinctive impulse of benevolence; but to sacrifice for the good of others the darling pursuit of one's life! to give up on that account the favourite, the cherished object of one's mind! this belongs only to the philosophy of Jesus. It was now that I understood what cutting off the right hand, and plucking out the right eye truly meant. But ah! my friend, if this is really the religion of Christ, how falsely are people often called Christians!

On the arrival of the man of the law, whom the Doctor had sent for to conduct the business, we all set out with the Lady for the place of her husband's confinement.

When we arrived at the great, gloomy mansion, Doctor Severan, thinking it indelicate to go immediately into the presence of his friend, sent his lawyer with the lady to inform her husband of his liberation, and in the mean time indulged my curiosity with a sight of the prison.

You have seen the dungeons in which the Mussulmans confine their malefactors, and in which their prisoners of war are often doomed to suffer the lingering torture of despair; to inhale the noxious vapours of pestilence, and to pine in all the miseries of disease and famine. But after what I have said of Christian charity, you will, no doubt, think it impossible that in a Christian country similar places should be found. This, indeed, at first sight, appears very inexplicable; but it only serves to confirm me in the truth of my former conjecture, respecting *a new revelation*, a supplementary code of Christian laws and Christian precepts, which, in many respects, must very essentially differ from the old one.

In this new gospel, I have every reason to believe from all that I have observed since my abode in England, that poverty is considered as one of the most heinous of crimes. It is accordingly by the *Christians of the new system*, not only stigmatised with a degree of infamy, but by their very laws

and under the immediate inspection of their sage magistrates, it is punished in the most examplary manner. The abhorrence in which this crime is held by those Christian legislators is, indeed, evident throughout the tenor of their laws.

Can a person contrive by villany to possess himself of the estate of another, provided it can be clearly proved that *poverty* had no share in instigating him to the offence, the law is satisfied with simple restitution. But should a poor starving wretch put forth his audacious hand to satisfy the calls of hunger or still the clamourous demands of an infant family, he is condemned to death, or doomed to everlasting wretchedness. You who are prejudiced in favour of the mild ordinances of our revered Pundits, will perhaps, think it unjust, that to the miserable mortal who steals the value of twenty rupees, and to him who boldly ventures on plundering the wealth of a family, adding murder to the crime of robbery, the same punishment should be allotted; but you will

admire the principle upon which the laws of these new Christians in this case proceeds. It throws the crime of poverty into the scale, which instantly settles the balance.

Even when poverty constitutes the sole offence, nothing is more equitable than the punishments which proceed in regular gradation, and correspond in exact proportion to the degree in which the crime exists. For instance, within the massy walls of this prison, whose iron gates open to receive the reeking murderer, the midnight thief, and all those miserable outcasts of society who, lost to every principal of shame, every feeling of humanity, have sunk into all the brutality of vice; those guilty of the crime of poverty are likewise immured. But think not that they are all equally wretched. No; those who can afford to defraud their creditors, are suffered by these wise legislators to live in a degree of luxury. Those who can save enough from the wreck of former times to pay for their accommodation, may

still enjoy some comparative degree of comfort. But it is those wretches who have lost their *all*, and are alike destitute of friends and fortune—it is they who are doomed to suffer the bitterness of confinement in all its horrours.

It is true, that some who follow the old system of Christianity, as it was taught by Jesus Christ and his Apostles, by whom poverty is *not* considered as so unpardonable a crime, have exerted their endeavours for relieving the sufferings of their fellow-creatures, who for small sums are shut up in these dreary abodes of wretchedness. But notwithstanding their endeavours, notwithstanding the zealous efforts, the heart-touching remonstrances of one of these Christians of the old school, who devotes his life to the children of misfortune;* still in these prisons many thousands of the inhabitants of this land of freedom are left to pine out a misera-

* We suppose the Rajah points at the benevolent exertions of Mr. Howard.

ble to existence, alike useless to themselves and to society. Many at whose birth the voice of congratulation has been raised, and over whose infant forms the tears of parental tenderness have been fondly shed, are here suffered to languish, unnoticed and unknown.

As for those wretches who have committed such offences against society as all nations upon earth have deemed criminal, they are here held in such just abhorrence, that it is not thought sufficient to visit their sins with mere *temporal punishment*, but every possible pains is taken to preserve them in such a state of wickedness as may give them every possible chance of being, according to the faith of the lawgivers, *miserable to all eternity.*

This you may, perhaps, esteem rather an unjustifiable degree of severity.—But consider, O benevolent Maandaara, that by the old Christian Shaster, none are excluded from the hopes of mercy who seek it by sincere repentance. Now nothing is more probable, than that many of those miserable

beings, who have been unwittingly swept into the torrent of vice, might, when they find themselves shipwrecked on its barren shores, gladly listen to the voice that would conduct them to the paths of peace and virtue. If kept in a state of separation from the bad, and favoured with means of instruction from the good, this would, no doubt, often be the case. But then consider what might be the consequence: perhaps some of these vile felons might come to have a higher seat in Heaven than some of the proud jealous guardians of the laws which had condemned them upon earth. The idea is not to be endured with patience! and to prevent any possibility of its being realized, the poor trembling wretch, new to vice, and whose mind is not yet hardened in iniquity, no sooner commits (or is said to have committed) the most trifling offence that stands within the cognisance of the law, than, hurled into the society of those veterans in sin, of whose repentance there is little reason to be

the unfortunate offender is gradually trained to an equal degree of depravity.

Thus the door of mercy is for ever shut; the returning path to virtue is barricaded and so filled up by the briers and the thorns which these new Christians have thrown in the way, that it becomes quite invisible; and lest reflection should point it out, intoxicating liquors are allowed in all prisons to be distributed in sufficient quantities to prevent the most distant apprehensions of such an event. Thus do these enlightened people exert their endeavours to fill the reg ions of Nareyka!!

As for the philosopher, who, I need not tell you, is a Christian according to the old Gospel, he deprecates the whole system, and was so much shocked at the sight of the young victims who are here devoted to vice in order that they may be afterwards immolated on the altars of justice, that no cordial less powerful than the sight of the happiness he had himself created would have had

efficacy to restore his mind to any degree of composure.

Before I conclude this epistle, I must entreat you to send for the good and pious Bramin Sheermaal;—tell him, that my heart reproaches me for the injustice I was guilty of towards him; I implore his pardon for the incredulity with which I regarded his account of the conduct of Christians.—Experience has now taught me to acknowledge, that his words were dictated by truth, and his observations emanated from wisdom!

All that I have written thou wilt not, perhaps, think it proper to read to Zamarcanda; many parts of it she certainly could not understand; but I request thou wouldest assure her, that the love of her brother is undiminished.—I embrace my son—and implore upon him the blessing of all the benignant Dewtahs!—May the fortunes of Maandaara be established for ever!—

What can I say more?

LETTER XIV.

SINCE I last took up the reed of friendship my heart has been fretted with vexation and my soul chilled with astonishment. Will the friend of Zaarmilla believe it possible, that I should have found fraud and falsehood, venality and corruption, even in the court-protected vehicle of publick information, that pure source of intelligence, called a Newspaper?

The manner in which I made the disagreeable discovery was, to me, no less extraordinary than the discovery itself. I went, as usual, yesterday morning to spend an hour at the neighbouring coffee-house, and, on entering it, was surprised to find myself the object of universal attention. Every eye was turned toward me; some few

seemed to regard me with a look of contempt; but the general expression was that of pity and compassion. I had advanced to a box and called for a newspaper, but was hesitating whether I should retire or stay to peruse its contents, when a gentleman, whom I observed to eye me with particular eagerness, approaching me with much formality, begged leave to inquire, whether I was indeed the Rajah of Almora, a native Prince of Rohilcund? On being answered in the affirmative, the gentleman, again bowing to the ground, thus proceeded: "I hope your highness will not attribute it to any want of respect that I have thus presumed to intrude myself into your presence. I entertain too much respect for whatever is illustrious in birth, or honourable in rank, or dignified in title, or exalted in authority, to do any thing derogatory to its greatness. I am but too conscious of the prejudice which your highness must inevitably entertain against this nation, to hope that you will look upon any individual belonging to

it without suspicion and abhorrence! But I hope to convince you, in spite of the reasons you have had to the contrary, that we are not a *nation* of monsters. Some virtue still remains among us, confined to me and my honourable friends, it is true; but we, Sir, are Englishmen; Englishmen, capable of blushing at the nefarious practices of delegated authority; Englishmen, who have not been completely embowelled of our natural entrails; our hearts, and galls, and spleens, and livers, have not been forcibly torn from our bodies, and their places supplied by shawls and lacks, and nabob-ships, and dewannes! We have real hearts of flesh and blood within our bosoms; hearts which bleed at the recital of human misery, and feel for the woes of your unhappy country, with all the warmth of unsophisticated virtue." Perceiving my intention to speak, "I know, Sir, what you would say," cried he, with vehemence: "You would tell me, that your hatred to the English race was founded in nature and in justice.—You

would tell me, that it is *we* who have desolated your Empire, who have turned the fruitful and delicious garden of Rohilcund into a waste and howling wilderness.—*We*, who have extirpated the noble race of warriours who were your kind protectors! your indulgent lords! your beneficent friends!—to whom you paid a proud submission; a dignified obedience; a subordination more desirable than the tumultuous spirit of the most exalted freedom!" Again I attempted to speak.—"Ah!" cried he, in a still louder tone, "you need not describe to me the ravages you have seen committed! the insults you have sustained! You need not tell me, that your friends have been slaughtered; your country plundered; your houses burned; your land laid waste; your Zenana dishonoured; and the favourite, the lovely, the virtuous wife of your affections, perhaps, torn from your agonizing bosom!" This was a chord not to be touched, even by the rude hand of a stranger, without exciting a visible emotion. "I see the subject is too much

for you," cried he, "it is too fraught with horrour to be surveyed with indifference. Nature sickens at the recollection, but you need say no more; depend upon it, I shall make a proper representation of your case. Through me, your wrongs shall find a tongue. I will proclaim to the world all that I have heard you utter. That mass of horrours, that system of iniquity, which your highness would describe, shall be laid open to the eye of day, and its wicked, nefarious, abominable, and detested author, exposed to the just indignation of the congregated universe!"—At these words, again bowing to the ground, he turned round and departed. As I had no doubt of the unhappy man's insanity, I exceedingly rejoiced at his departure, and that he had done no mischief to himself or others during this paroxysm of delirium.

Among the crowd, which the vociferation of this unhappy maniack had attracted round us, I perceived one of the gentlemen I had met at Miss Ardent's; and was happy

to take the opportunity of renewing our acquaintance. From him I learned, that the notice of the noisy orator had been drawn upon me by a paragraph inserted in a newspaper of that morning, which, after mentioning my name and describing my person, falsely and wickedly insinuated, "that I had come there on behalf of the Hindoo inhabitants of Bengal, to complain of the horrid cruelties and unexampled oppression, under which, through the maladministration of the British governour of India, we were made to groan."

I was exceedingly shocked at the idea of the consequences that might arise to the chosen servant of the minister, the writer of the newspaper, from having suffered himself to be thus imposed upon. I did not know what punishment might await the confidential conductor of this vehicle of intelligence, should his master discover that he had suffered a falsehood to pollute that pure fountain of publick instruction, in which his care for the morals, the virtue, the fortune,

the health, and the beauty of all the subjects of this extensive Empire, is so fully evinced. The gentleman observing my anxiety, told me that the best method of proceeding was, to authorise the publisher to contradict the paragraph alluded to in the next paper. And that he would, if I chose it, go then with me to his house.

Eager to extricate the poor man from the the dilemma into which his ignorance had thrown him, I gladly accepted the friendly offer, and we proceeded immediately to the office of this prime minister of fame, who received us with all the stateliness which an idea of the consequence of situation never fails to inspire. The gentleman took upon himself to open the business; which he did by saying, "that he had brought with him a stranger, of high rank, who considered himself aggrieved by a paragraph which had been that morning inserted in his paper; and then pointing it out, he told him, that I would expect to see a contradiction of that part of it which related to the British go-

vernour of India, for whom I entertained sentiments of the most profound respect." The conductor shrugged up his shoulders, and said, "the paragraph had been paid for."—"That is to say, the contradiction of it must be paid for likewise," returned the gentleman. "I dare say the Rajah will have no objection." Observing the astonishment that was painted in my countenance, he told me that nothing was more commonly practised. "Yes," added the news writer, "the gentleman must certainly allow, that when a falsehood has been paid for, it is not reasonable to expect that it can be contradicted for nothing!—It would be quite *dishonourable!*" "What!" cried I, with an emotion no longer to be suppressed, "and is it then in the power of a piece of gold to procure circulation to whatever untruths the base malignity of envy or of hatred may choose to dictate? Are these the articles of intelligence diffused at such vast expense over this Christian kingdom? Ah! ye simple people! whom distance has happily pre-

served in ignorance of the ways of news writers, how little do ye know the real value of what ye so liberally pay for!"

So much was I disgusted, that if my own character alone had been concerned, I would rather have submitted to the evil than to the remedy.—As it was, I threw down the guinea and departed, with rather less reverence for the authenticity of newspaper intelligence, than I had entertained at my entrance.

The disagreeable consequences of this affair have not stopped here; I can no longer stir abroad without attracting the gaze of observation.—Places of publick entertainment are filled by the bare expectation of beholding me; all those of resort in the outskirts of the town have advertised me as part of their bill of fare; and I am this evening disappointed of the pleasure I expected at a new species of amusement, called a Masquerade, from seeing in the newspaper that my intention is known to the publick.—In fine, I can no longer find happiness in this

metropolis, and would with pleasure at this moment re-embark on the bosom of that ocean, whose distant waves now beat against the happy shores of India. Some weeks must elapse before such an opportunity can be found. I shall, therefore, in the interim, avail myself of the polite and friendly invitation of Lady Grey and the family of the Ardents to go into the country.

If I can prevail upon the philosopher to accompany me, I shall indeed be happy. And let not Maandaara too much exult over the disappointment of his friend, when I confess to him, that experience has now convinced me that though the novelty of manners and opinions may produce amusement and the variety of human characters afford some degree of instruction, it is the society of the friend we esteem that can alone solace and satisfy the heart!

WHEN I vainly flattered myself with obtaining the company of Severan, I had entirely forgot his experiments. He has now engaged in them with renewed ardour; and so deeply is he interested in their success, that no motive, less powerful than the possibility of relieving a fellow creature in distress, would be sufficient to make him quit his laboratory. The morning after that in which we had visited the building allotted to the reception of the unfortunate people, whom these good Christians have so piously devoted to Eemen,* I paid a visit to the worthy family who had been rescued from the punishment of poverty, and after having done what was in my power to preserve them from being found guilty of a like crime in future, directed them to return to Severan the sum he had so generously advanced.

But though I am thus deprived of his company for the present, he promises to join me as soon as his scientifick engagements

* The Prince of Hell.

will admit. And in the mean time, he tells me, I may expect amusement (I wonder he did not rather say instruction) from the characters I shall meet at Sir Caprice Ardent's. This man of many minds has left his temples and his turrets, his pillars and pilasters, his arcades and his colonnades, to be finished by the next lover of architecture who may chance to spring up in the family; and has retired into the country to enjoy, without interruption, the calm pleasures of philosophy. The philosophy which at present engrosses the soul of the Baronet is, however, of a different species from that which engages the capacious mind of Doctor Severan. It is a philosophy which disdains the slow process of experiment, and chiefly glories in contradicting common sense. Its main object is, to shew that the *things which are, are not*, and the *things which are not, are;* and this is called Metaphysicks.

As I understand the matter, the art of these metaphysical champions lies in puz-

zling each other, and the best puzzler carries off the prize.

While these Christian-born philosophers pique themselves in turning from light to walk in the darkness of their own vain imaginations, may the words that are written in the "Ocean of Wisdom," never escape from our remembrance!

"Though one should be intimately acquainted with the whole circle of Sciences, and master of the principles on which the most abstruse of them are founded; yet if this knowledge be unaccompanied by the humble worship of the Omniscient God, it shall prove altogether vain and unprofitable."*

I have heard of a conveyance, which, although not eligible for my personal accom-

* This passage appears to have been taken from the Tervo-Vaulever Kuddel, a composition which bears the marks of considerable antiquity, and which, though written not by a Bramin, but a Hindoo of the lowest order, is held in high estimation for the beauties of its poetry and intrinsick value of its precepts. Part of it has been lately translated into English, by Mr. Kindersley.

modation, yet will serve to transmit this letter to my friend.

May he who possesses the eight attributes, receive your prayers! May you walk in the shadows of Veeshnu! and when by the favour of Varuna this letter shall reach the dwelling of Maandaara, may he read its contents with the same sentiments of friendship as now beats in the bosom of Zaarmilla. The brother of Zamarcanda salutes the sister of his heart, and weeps over the tender blossom he entrusted to her bosom. O that by her care his mind may be nourished by the refreshing dew of early virtue!

What can I say more?

LETTER XV.

PRAISE to Ganesa!* How would the God, whose symbol is an Elephant's Head, have been astonished, could he have descended to have been a spectator of the scene I have just now witnessed? Had he beheld, in what a ridiculous light he is represented by the Philosophers of Europe, who pretend to be his worshippers, I am afraid, he would have been more than half ashamed of his votaries. But, let me not anticipate. You must travel the whole journey: and, according to my plan of punctual and minute information, you must be told, that I left London the morning after that in which my last epistle was concluded. And travelling, af-

* The God of Wisdom, whose symbol is the Head of an Elephant.

English servant, sometimes the length of a whole evening. Making up my mind, therefore, to spend two or three hours, at this sorry village, I was not a little pleased, to hear, that I had the prospect of some company; and that two gentlemen from Sir Caprice Ardent's, were in the same house. They soon introduced themselves to my acquaintance; and it was not long before I discovered, that these were two of the Philosophers, mentioned to me by my friend Severan.

They informed me, that they had been brought to the village on a disagreeable errand. They had, it seems, been stopped and robbed in their way from London to Ardent Hall. The robber was now in custody, but their evidence was necessary for his commitment to prison. On this account, they were desired to appear before a Magistrate; and as I rejoiced in every new scene, from which I can hope to acquire a new idea, I gladly accompanied them thither. Little did I know, what acquisitions were

to be made to my stock of knowledge! or, that in the simple business of recognizing the person of a robber, I was to be made acquainted with a complete system of Philosophy. Alas! ignorant that I was! I knew not that to involve the simplest question in perplexity, and to veil the plain dictates of common sense, in the thick mist of obscurity and doubt, is an easy matter with metaphysical Philosophers!

We were shewn into the Hall of Justice, and found the Magistrate seated in his chair. This portly personage, who in figure very much resembled those images of the Mandarines of China, which are often to be seen both in Asia and Europe, with due solemnity of voice, addressing himself to the eldest of the two gentlemen, desired him to examine the features of the culprit, who now stood before him, and say, whether he was satisfied as to his *identity*. "Much may be said upon the subject of *identity*," replied Mr. Puzzledorf; "the greatest philosophers have differed in their opinions concerning

it, and ill would it become me, to decide upon a question of such vast importance." "You have but to look in the man's face, Sir," returned the Magistrate, "to see whether he is the identical person by whom you have been robbed; and I do not see, what any philosopher has to say concerning it." "It would ill become me to instruct your worship upon this point," resumed Mr. Puzzledorf, "but his being *identically* the same, is in *my opinion*, altogether impossible. Nor is my opinion singular; happily, it is supported by the most respectable authorities. Locke, indeed, makes identity to consist in consciousness, but consciousness exists in succession, it cannot be the same in any two moments. His Hypothesis, therefore, is not tenable; in fact, Watts, Collins, Clarke, Butler, Berkley, Price, Priestley, all have, in some degree, differed from it." "Pray Sir, were these gentlemen Justices of the King's Bench?" interrupted the Magistrate; "if they were not, I must take the liberty of telling you, Sir, they were very impertinent to interfere

in such questions! I am not to be taught the business of a Justice of Peace, by any of them.—And again ask you, whether, that man, who calls himself Tobias, alias Timothy Trundle, be the very identical person, by whom you were robbed on the 18th instant, on his Majesty's highway?" "I must again repeat it," returned the Philosopher, "the thing is impossible; it is proved beyond a doubt, that there is no such quality as permanent identity, appertaining to any thing whatever:—and that no one can any more remain one and the same person for two moments together, than that two successive moments can be one, and the same moment. And if you will give me the honour of stating my arguments upon the subject, which I shall do in a manner truly philosophical, I make no doubt of convincing you, of the truth of my system. It is, indeed, a system so clear, so plain, so unanswerable, that nothing but the most wilful blindness and obstinacy, can resist its truth." "That I deny," said Mr. Axiom,

interrupting his friend. "I agree with you, that consciousness, being frequently interrupted, is not strictly continuous, and, therefore, the continuity of consciousness cannot constitute identity: I also allow, that wherever there is a chemical combination, there is a corresponding change of properties, and that the majority of the particles of which the man is composed, are necessarily in succession changed.—But, I assert, and will undertake to prove, that there exist certain stamina which are never carried off. Where these stamina are situated, will, I know, admit of dispute. In the heart, say some; in the brain, say others: for my part, I think it is most probable, that they are placed in that part of the brain which approaches the nearest possible to the very top of the nose, which situation, is, undoubtedly, the most convenient for receiving the notices sent to it from the organs of sight, hearing, smelling, &c. and which may be more incontestably proved, from the following arguments: first"——"Fire and fury!" exclaim-

ed the magistrate, "this is more than human patience can bear! But do not think, gentlemen, that I am to be made a fool of in this way; I shall let you know, that it is no such easy matter to make a fool of me! And was it not for the sake of my worthy, friend Sir Caprice Ardent, I should let you know the consequences of insulting one of his Majesty's justices of the peace, in the exercise of his duty. A vile misdemeanor! a high breach of decorum! and not be suffered to pass with impunity. Once for all, I desire you, Sir (to Axiom) to examine the countenance of the culprit, and, without loss of time, to declare—whether he be actually the person guilty of the *alledged crime?*"

"As for crimes," replied Mr Axiom, "I absolutely deny the existence of crime in any case whatever. What is by the vulgar erroneously called so, is, in the enlightened eye of philosophy, nothing more than an errour in judgment. And, indeed, according to my friend Doctor Sceptick (Tim Trundle's former master) we have no right to pre-

dicate this much.—For what is right? what is wrong? what is vice? what is virtue? but terms merely relative, and which are to be applied by the standard of a man's own reason. If, for instance, the reason of Mr. Timothy Trundle, leads him to revolt at the unjust distribution of property, and to think it virtue, to give his feeble aid towards redressing that enormous abuse, who shall dare to call it wrong ?" "I can tell you, Sir," cried the Justice, "that the law—will think it *right*, that Mr Timothy Trundle, should be hanged for so doing.—Nor, would it be any loss to the world, if all the promulgators of such doctrines, the aiders and abettors of such acts of atrocity, shared the same fate!" "That Sir," returned Axiom, with great calmness, "I conceive to be an errour of judgment, on the part of your worship."—"You, however, declare, that this is the person by whom you were robbed?" said the Justice. "Yes," replied Axiom, "I have no scruples on the subject of his personal identity; identity being, as I said before"—

"O say no more upon the subject, but let the clerk read your affidavit, and have done with it," cried the magistrate. The clerk proceeded, and the solemn appeal to the Deity—an appeal which so nearly concerned the life of a fellow-creature, was made—by the extraordinary, and, to me, incomprehensible ceremony of kissing a little dirty-looking book!

The prisoner, who had hitherto maintained a strict silence, now addressed himself to Mr. Axiom, to whom, it seems, he was well known, having long been servant to his particular friend. He began in a sullen tone, as follows:

"I did not think as how it would have been your honour, that would have had the heart to turn so against me at last. Many a time and oft, have I heard you, and my master, Doctor Sceptick, say, that all mankind were equal, and that the poor had as good a right to property as the rich. You said, moreover, that they were all fools, that would not make the most they could of this

world, seeing as how there was no other; for that religion was all a hum, and the Parson a rogue, who did not himself believe a word of it.—Nay, the very last day that ever I attended you at dinner, did not you say, again and again, that Kings, Princes, and Prime Ministers, were all worse than pick-pockets? And yet now you would go for to hang me, for having only civilly asked a few guineas, to make up a little matter of loss, I had had in the Lottery. I wonder you a'nt ashamed to turn so against your own words." "No, Timothy," returned the philosopher; "my opinions are not so easily changed. No man, ever yet convinced me, of being in an errour. You have only to regret your having lived in a dark age, when vulgar prejudices so far prevail, as to consider laws as necessary to the well-being of society.—But be comforted, Timothy! The age of reason approaches. That glorious æra is fast advancing, in which every man shall do that which is right in his own eyes, and

the fear of the gallows shall have as little influence, as the fear of hell."

Ah! that I had kept to my good grandmother's wholesome doctrine of hell and damnation!" (exclaimed the poor wretch, whom the Justice's men were now dragging back to prison)—" I should not now be at the mercy of a false friend, who laughed me out of the fear of God—and now leave me to the mercy of the gallows!"—He continued to speak, but we could no longer hear. He was dragged to his prison, and we having made our obedience to the Magistrate, departed. I have been enabled thus circumstantially, to detail the particulars of this curious conversation, from the politeness of the Magistrate's nephew, who was so kind as to furnish me with a copy of his notes, taken down in, what is called, Short Hand.

It is possible, that much of it may appear to you unintelligible; but be not discouraged. How should our uninlightened minds, expect to understand the language of philo-

sophers, since from all I can learn, they seldom throroughly understand themselves?

On returning to the Inn, I found the horses in waiting, the gentlemen's were also in readiness, and we proceeded in company to Ardent Hall. My reception from the Baronet, was very cordial. That of this Lady, was most frigidly polite. Her daughter, did not seem to remember ever having seen me before; but the elder Miss Ardent, shook me by the hand, with a degree of frankness, as masculine as her understanding.

The conversation of the evening, turned upon the same topicks, that had been discussed before the Magistrate, Mr. Axiom and Mr. Puzzledorf doing little more than support the opinions they had formerly advanced. Sir Caprice Ardent, seemed, in general, disposed to agree with the last speaker; and Doctor Sceptick, who made one of the party, made a point of agreeing with none.—Miss Ardent retired to write letters, and her Ladyship and her daughter,

remained as silent as did the friend of Maandaara.

O SHEERMAAL!—Wise and learned Bramin!—May thy meek and generous spirit, pardon the presumption of my ignorance, which refusing to confide in thy experience, persisted in cherishing the ill-founded notion, that all the people of England were Christians!—With all humility, I now retract my errour: and confess—that of the many religions prevalent in this strange country, Christianity (as it is set forth in the Shaster) has the smallest number of votaries: and, according to the accounts of my new friend, is fast journeying to oblivion.

Much do the Philosophers exult, in exposing the weakness and wickedness of its authors. These artful and designing men, who having entered into a combination to

lead the most virtuous lives, having bound themselves to the practice of fortitude and forbearance, meekness and magnanimity, piety towards God, and benevolence to all mankind, weakly and foolishly, refused to take to themselves any merit for their conduct; and renouncing all worldly honours and interests, resigned themselves to persecution, pains, tortures, and death, in support of the truth of their doctrines.

All this appears very foolish in the eyes of the Philosophers; who, judging of others by themselves, pronounce so much self-denial, fortitude, and forbearance, to be utterly impossible. The God of the Christians, appears in their eyes, as very unreasonable, in exacting purity of heart—and humility from his votaries. They therefore, think it is doing much service to mankind, to free them from these uneasy restraints, and to lead them to the worship of Dewtah, that are not quite so unreasonable.

To make the attempt, is all that is necessary, towards obtaining the appellation of Philosopher.

On examining the Cosha,* I found, indeed, that the word Philosopher, was said to signify, "a man deep in knowledge, either moral or natural"—but, from my own experience, I can pronounce the definition to be nugatory: and that those who usually call themselves such, are men, who, without much knowledge, either moral or natural, entertain a high idea of their own superiority, from having the temerity to reject whatever has the sanction of experience, and common sense.

The poojah of Philosophers is performed to certain Idols, called Systems. The faith of each system has been promulgated by the priest, who either first formed the Idol, or first set it up to receive the poojah of the credulous. This faith, is received by the votary of the system with undoubting confidence, and defended with the fervency of pious zeal. It must be confessed, that

* Dictionary.

this zeal, sometimes carries the Philosophers to a pitch of intolerance, that is repugnant to the feelings of a Hindoo. Never did the most bigotted derveish* of the Mussulmans, betray more abhorrence at the sight of the Idols of the Pagoda, than is evinced by the worshipper of system towards a Christian priest! And yet, so far are the latter from returning any portion of this dislike, that the majority of them are very careful not to offend the Philosophers, by too rigid an adherence to the precepts of *that* Shaster, to which they know their adversaries have such an insuperable antipathy.

All the Philosophers now at Ardent-Hall, perform poojah to different systems: and seem to have no opinion in common, except the expectation of the return of the Suttee Jogue, which they distinguish by the name of *The Age of Reason.*

* The antipathy of the Mussulmans to every species of Idolatry, is still the occasion of frequent disturbances to the Hindoos, in the performance of the superstitious ceremonies of their religion.

In this blessed æra of purity and perfection, it is believed by each of the Philosophers, that the worship of his Idol shall be established; and the doctrines of his priest, be the faith of the world.

"Then," says Mr. Puzzledorf, "will be evinced the dignity of man," for this is the Idol to which Mr. Puzzledorf professes the performance of poojah. You are, perhaps, curious to know in what this dignity consists? Know, then, that it appears, from the researches of the priest of Mr. Puzzledorf—that some difference in point of organization, doth actually exist between him and a Bamboo, or a Bramble-bush: no brain having as yet been discovered in any of the vegetable tribes. Should such a discovery crown the labours of some future Philosopher, what a sad stroke will it be to the dignity of Man! He will then be reduced to a level, not only with the beasts of the field, but with the very trees of the forest! The similarity is already too conspicuous. Like them, he is doomed slowly

to advance to maturity; shortly to flourish, and quickly to decay. Like them too, according to the faith of Mr. Puzzledorf, he is doomed to moulder into dust, from which, there is no hopes of resuscitation, no prospect of revival!—Such in the eyes of the adherents of this system, is the vaunted dignity of Man!

The Idol of Mr. Axiom, is the little stamina at the top of the nose. This, he declares to be imperishable, and that it must of necessity exist to all eternity.—To the faith of Mr. Axiom, Mr. Puzzledorf opposes an argument that is frequently made use of by the bigotted of all sects, against the opinions of their adversaries:—viz. That it is *nonsense*. He says, moreover, that in the age of reason, it will incontestably appear, that every particle is alike liable to the decomposition which these poor bodies of our's must undergo in the laboratory of death, who is too good a chemist to suffer the little favourite Stamina of Mr. Axiom, to escape him. Both Philosophers appeal for the

truth of their systems, to the experiments of Doctor Severan. Alas! little does the good Doctor think that the existence of a future state depends upon the management of his crucible!

I have not been able to discover the name of the system, to which Doctor Sceptic pays his vows, the only thing I have ever heard him attempt to prove, is, that nothing ever was, will, or can be proved. All religions being, in his opinion, equally false, ridiculous, and absurd. But, though he performs not poojah to the Idols of any of his brother Philosophers, it is the religion of Christianity, against which the arrows of his sarcasm are chiefly pointed. When an opportunity occurs of venting the overflowings of his zeal, in a sneer at any of the opinions or practices of the Christians, his rigid features relax into a smile of triumph, which, for a moment, dispels from his countenance the gloom of discontent. It seems to have been the endeavour of his life, to eradicate from his bosom, those social feel-

ings and affections, which form so great a part of the felicity of common mortals.—A stranger to the animating glow of friendship, and the tender confidence of esteem; he considers all attachments as a proof of weakness—into which, if he has ever in any degree relaxed—it is in favour of a nephew, a hopeful youth, whom he piques himself upon having freed from the prejudices he had contracted from a pious father, at whose piety, and whose prejudices, the young man now laughs in a very becoming manner!

The Idol to whose service this young man hath devoted himself, is called Atheism. From all that I have been able to learn, Atheism is an infernal deity, who demands of his votaries, such cruel sacrifices—that every one initiated into the mysteries of this faith, must make a solemn and absolute renunciation of the use of his senses—shut his eyes upon the fair volume of Nature—and deny to his heart, the pleasurable emotions of admiration and gratitude!

Such are the sacrifices required by this Idol, even from its speculative votaries. The zeal of its practical proselytes, carries them still farther.—I am told, that the female converts seldom fail to make an offering to Atheism of their peace, purity, and good fame; and that of its worshippers, among the lower orders of men, numbers every year suffer martyrdom at a place called Newgate; which I suppose to be a temple dedicated to this superstition.

What are the posthumous honours, which the martyrs of Atheism, receive from their brethren, the philosophers, I have not been able to discover, as it is a subject on which the philosophers modestly decline to expatiate.

From the conversations that I have overheard, between the nephew of Doctor Sceptick, and Mr. Vapour, who is one of the most renowned teachers of this faith; I find, that its adherents perform poojah to certain inferiour Dewtah, called Existing, or External, circumstances, energies, and powers, of

whom, I am not yet sufficiently prepared to speak.

Mr. Vapour is particularly tenacious of his faith, which is, indeed, of a very extraordinary nature. Rejecting all the received opinions that have hitherto prevailed in the world, and utterly discrediting the circumstances upon which they have been founded; he reserves his whole stock of credulity for futurity. Here his faith is so strong, as to bound over the barriers of probability, to unite all that is discordant in nature, and to believe in things impossible.

The age of reason, is thought by Mr. Vapour, to be very near at hand. Nothing, he says, is so easy as to bring it about immediately. It is only to persuade the people in power to resign its exercise; the rich to part with their property; and with one consent, to abolish all laws, and put an end to all government: "Then," says this credulous philosopher, "shall we see the perfection of virtue!" Not such virtue, it is true, as has heretofore passed current in

the world. Benevolence will not then be heard of; gratitude will be considered as a crime, and punished with the contempt it so justly deserves. Filial affection would, no doubt, be treated as a crime of a still deeper dye, but that, to prevent the possibility of such a breach of virtue, no man, in the age of reason, shall be able to guess who his father is; nor any woman to say to her husband, behold your son. Chastity, shall then be considered as a weakness, and the virtue of a female estimated according as she has had sufficient energy to break its mean restraints. "To what sublime heights," exclaims this sapient philosopher, "may we not expect that virtue will then be seen to soar!—By destroying the domestick affections, what an addition will be made to human happiness! And when man is no longer corrupted by the tender and endearing ties of brother, sister, wife, and child, how greatly will his dispositions be meliorated! The fear of punishment too, that ignoble bondage, which, at present, restrains the

energies of so many great men, will no longer damp the noble ardour of the daring robber, or the midnight thief. Nor will any man then be degraded by working for another. The divine energies of the soul will not then be stifled by labouring for support. What is necessary, every individual may, without difficulty, do for himself. Every man shall then till his own field, and cultivate his own garden."—"And pray how are the Ladies to be clothed in the age of reason?" asked Miss Ardent.—"Any Lady," replied the philosopher, "who chooses to wear clothes, which, in this cold climate, may by some be considered as a matter of necessity, must herself pluck the wool from the back of the sheep, and spin it on a distaff, of her own making." "But, she cannot weave it," rejoined Miss Ardent, "without a loom; a loom cannot well be made without iron tools, and iron tools can have no existence without the aggregated labours of many individuals." "True," returned Mr. Vapour; "and it is therefore probable, that

in the glorious æra I speak of, men will again have recourse to the skins of beasts for covering; and these will be procured according to the strength and capacity of the individual. A summer's dress, may be made of the skins of mice, and such animals; while those of sheep, hares, horses, dogs, &c. may be worn in winter. Such things may, for a time, take place. But as the human mind advances to that perfection, at which, when deprived of religion, laws, and government, it is destined to arrive, men will, no doubt, possess sufficient *energy*, to resist the effects of cold; and to exist, not only without clothing, but without food also. When reason is thus far advanced, an effort of the mind will be sufficient to prevent the approach of disease, and stop the progress of decay. People will not then be so foolish as to die." "I can believe, that in the age of reason, women won't be troubled with the vapours," replied Miss Ardent, "but, that they should be able to live without food and clothing, is another affair." "Women!"

repeated Mr. Vapour, with a contemptuous smile; "we shall not then be troubled with —women. In the age of reason, the world shall contain only a race of men ! !"

Nothing could be more repugnant to the opinions of Miss Ardent, than this assertion. —This worthy daughter of Serraswatti is firmly persuaded, that, in the age of reason, a very different doctrine will be established. It is her opinion, that the perfection of the female understanding will then be universally acknowledged.

She pants for that blessed period, when the eyes of men shall no longer be attracted by the charms of youth and beauty; when mind, and mind alone, shall be thought worthy the attention of a philosopher.

In that wished-for æra, the talents of women, she says, shall not be debased by household drudgery, or their noble spirits broken by base submission to usurped authority. The reins will then be put into the hands of wisdom; and as women will, in the age of reason, probably be found to have the lar-

gest share, it is they who will then drive the chariot of state, and guide the steeds of war!

Mr. Axiom whose deference to the opinions of Miss Ardent is implicit and unvariable, perfectly coincides in her opinion.—"Who," said he, the other evening, in discoursing upon this subject; "who would look for me, in the insipid features of a girl? It is when the countenance has acquired a character, which it never can do under the period of forty, that it becomes an object of admiration to a man of sense. Ah! how different is the sentiment which it then inspires!" The tender sigh, which was heaved by Mr. Axiom, at the conclusion of this sentence, in vibrating on the ears of Miss Ardent, seemed to touch some pleasant unison, that overspread her countenance with a smile. You, my friend, will, I doubt not, smile also, at hearing of these glad tidings for grandmothers; and divert yourself with thinking, when this empire of reason shall be extended to the regions of

the east, what curious revolutions it will make in the Zenanas of Hindostan!—May the Gods of our fathers preserve thee from the spirits of the deep—and the systems of philosophers!—

What can I say more?

LETTER XVI.

MAY He, who at all times claims preference in adoration, preserve thee!!

The day after that in which I last took up the reed of instruction, some strangers arrived at Ardent Hall, who had come into the country on purpose to see a celebrated water-fall—on whose beauties, they poured out such encomiums, as kindled the flame of curiosity in my bosom.

I no sooner expressed my desire of visiting this scene of wonders, than Sir Caprice, with great politeness, ordered the chief officer of his household to attend me thither.—It was natural to expect, that some of the philosophers might have felt an inclination to view a scene, to the description of which, it appeared, they were no strangers.—But,

alas! to the worshipper of systems, the fair face of Nature has no charms!—In vain, for him, does the appearance of Arjoon tinge the cheeks of the * cup-bearers of the sky, with the crimson blush of gladness! In vain for him, do the robes of the seasons, wove in the changeful looms of Nature, present the ceaseless charm of variety! In vain, for him, smiles the soft beauties of the blooming valley, when the linnet, sitting on his rose-bush, sings forth the praises of the spring! And equally in vain, for him, doth Nature expose to view the terrours, of her wonder-working arm, in the scenes of sublimity and grandeur! Midst all the beauties of creation, a philosopher sees nothing beautiful, but the system which he worships!

Happily for me, Mr. Trueman, the steward of Sir Caprice, was a stranger to systems; but had cultivated so much taste for the beauties of the rural landscape, as enabled him to point out to my observation, a

* An appellation for the Clouds, which frequently occurs in Asiatick Poetry.

thousand charms, which might otherwise have escaped my notice. Nor was this the only benefit I derived from his society. From his plain good sense, I received more real and useful information; in our ride of four hours, than I had gained in nearly as many weeks, in the company of the philosophers.

For the distance of many miles round Ardent-Hall, the country is irregular and undulating. It abounds in trees, which, though they boast not the height of the Mango, or the vast circumference of the Banyan, are neither destitute of grandeur, nor of beauty. These are not clumped together in solemn groves, or gloomy jungles; but are planted, as to surround the small fields into which the country is divided; each of which small enclosures, now fraught with the riches of the yellow harvest, appears like a "Topaz in a setting of Emeralds." The cheerful aspect of the peasants, busily employed in cutting down the grain, while their fancies seemed to revel in the

scene of plenty, excited the most pleasurable emotions in my heart; for who but a philosopher, can "breathe the air of hilarity, and not partake of the intoxication of delight?"*

The scene, however, soon changed: an extensive plain opened before us, where no yellow harvest waved its golden head—where no tall trees afforded shelter to the traveller—all was waste and barren. Upon inquiring of my intelligent companion, the reason of this wonderful change, he could only inform me, that this was called *a Common*, and that it could not be cultivated, without a solemn act of the Legislature. I now perceived, that it was from reasons of state, that these great portions of land (for Commons occur very frequently in England) were suffered to remain desolate; but, in vain did I endeavour to discover the mo-

* In several passages of this Letter, the Rajah seems to have adopted the imagery of the Persian Poet Inatulla, of Delhi—with whose writings, he was, doubtless, well acquainted.

tives which could induce the government to lay this restraint on cultivation.

As geese appeared to have here an exclusive right of pasturage, I was inclined to think, that they might, perhaps, be the objects of superstitious veneration to the English court; but on applying to my guide I found that geese were not of the number of protected animals; and that far from being honoured in the manner of those which are called *Game*, the murder of a goose might be performed without ceremony, by the most ignoble hands. Perhaps, thought I, it is from the benevolent regard of the minister towards the old women, who keep these noisy flocks; but, alas! a little reflection convinced me, that the age of reason, is not yet sufficiently established, to countenance the supposition. It must, then, be from the pious apprehension of endangering the virtue of the people, by an overflow of plenty.—If this be really the case—it must be confessed, that a more effectual method could not be taken to bring about the desired end.

Having passed the commons, we entered into a deep and narrow valley, over-hung with frowning rocks; these seemed frequently to close upon us, and sternly to deny all access to the interiour scene. A silver stream, which alternately kissed the feet of the precipices on each side, encouraged us, to proceed, and gently conducted us to the furthermost end of the valley. It was here, that the glories of the cataract burst upon our senses.—But how shall my feeble pen do justice to such a scene? Can I, by description, stun the ears of Maandaara, with the thunder of the falling waters; or present to his imagination the grotesque figures of the rocks surrounding the magnificent bason into which they fell? Can I bring terrour to his bosom, by the mention of the over-jutting crags, which, on one side, topped the precipice; or produced in his miud the sensation of delight, by a minute description of the various trees and shrubs, whose thick foliage ornamented the opposite bank?—Ah no! The task is impossible; or possible only to the magick pen of poetry.

By Zaarmilla, it must be passed over in silence!

We returned to Ardent-Hall, as the chariot of Surraya was sinking behind the distant hills. On approaching the house, we beheld a scene of extraordinary commotion. All was hurry and confusion.—Men and boys, household servants and labourers, all seemed engaged in the pursuit of some invisible object. At one part of the lawn, we beheld Doctor Sceptick and Mr. Puzzledorf, cautiously stepping along, and carefully peeping into every bush they passed; at another place, we saw Sir Caprice, attended by the rest of the philosophers, carrying a large net —which, with much care, they softly spread upon a hedge, and then began to beat the roots of the shrubs that composed it, in the most furious manner.

"What is the matter?" cried my companion, to a lad who was running past us. "What is the occasion of all this bustle? What, in the name of goodness are you all about?" "Catching Sparrows, Sir," returned

the lad, in breathless hurry. "Catching Sparrows!" repeated the good Steward. "Philosophers, catching Sparrows! That is doing some good with their learning, indeed!—If they had begun this work sooner, the early corn in the South field would have been the better for it!"

As my mind has not yet been sufficiently contaminated by the practices of Christians, to take pleasure in beholding misery inflicted upon any part of the animated creation, I hastened from this cruel scene, and took refuge in my own apartment. After some time spent in meditating on the cruel dispositions of Europeans, and in performing poojah to the benignant Dewtah of our fathers—I descended, to pay my respects to Miss Ardent, whose voice I heard in the Hall. "How happy it is, that you have returned to night!" exclaimed she, on perceiving me. "You have come in time to assist at the most wonderful of all discoveries! What will your friends in India think, when

you tell them, that sparrows may be changed into honey-bees?"

It is a subject on which none of my friends could possibly entertain a doubt, returned I; the transmigration of soul from body to body, is evidently necessary for its purification.—It is the doctrine of the Vedas —and its authority is unquestionable. "But the change I speak of, has nothing to do with the doctrine of transmigration," rejoined Miss Ardent. "*Our* sparrows are still to continue *good* and *real* sparrows: it is only their instincts, that are to undergo a change, from the power of *external circumstances*. So young Sceptick declared this morning at breakfast, and my brother, whose imagination takes fire at every new idea, declared instantly, that the experiment should be made. It is true," continued Miss Ardent, "this theory is not confined to sparrows—The reasoning faculties, of which we poor two-legged animals are so proud—and the various instincts, which mark each tribe of the brute creation, all

equally originate in a combination of *external circumstances.* And, according to the arguments of the young philosopher, I see no reason, why, by a proper course of education, a monkey may not be a Minister of State, or a goose, Lord Chancellor of England."

Here a stop was put to our conversation, by the entrance of the gentlemen, each of whom was so full of his deeds of prowess, in the engagement with the sparrows, that he could talk of nothing else. One hundred sparrows, were already taken prisoners:—but as this was only one third of the number declared necessary to form a hive, a reward was offered by the Baronet, for each live sparrow that should be brought to the Hall in the course of the succeeding day:—a measure which was crowned with such success, that, before sun-set on the following evening, the number was declared complete.

Another tedious day elapsed, before the hut destined for their future residence, could

be finished; this was made exactly after the model of those of the domestick bees, which, in this country, are built of straw, made into small bundles, and bound together by the fibres of an aquatick plant. This hut, or hive, as it is called, bore the same proportion to its model, as the size of a sparrow does to that of a bee; it was furnished with cross sticks for the support of the combs, and that the sparrows might have no apology for not beginning immediately to work, great care was taken that no convenience usually afforded to the bees, should be wanting.—After undergoing a careful examination by the philosophers, this huge sparrow-hive was placed upon a platform, that had been reared for its reception; and the sparrows having been brought in baskets to the spot, Sir Caprice Ardent, in presence of all the philosophers, with his own hand, pair by pair, deposited them in their new abode. The apparent satisfaction with which they entered their hive, gave such a convincing proof of the power of external

circumstances, as already rendered Sir Caprice a complete convert to the system. At the conclusion of the ceremony, he cordially shook hands with the young philosopher, and requesting the rest of the party would excuse him for the evening, he retired to his study, to begin a journal of these important proceedings, with which he intended to illuminate the world.

At the first indication of the dawn of morning, I went, as is my constant practice, to the river side, and after the performance of the accustomary poojah, and having bathed in the refreshing stream, I strolled into that part of the garden, where the honey-making sparrows were placed.

It was at an hour when my meditations have here never been disturbed by the appearance of a fellow mortal. Judge then of my surprise, at beholding the Baronet, who, wrapped in his night-robes, stood at the side of the new erected hut, listening with eager ears, to catch the first sound that should emanate from its precincts—on perceiving

me, he made the signal of silence, and then beckoning me to approach—inquired, in a soft whisper, whether I did not hear the sparrows hum? I told him, that I did indeed hear a humming noise; but believed, that it proceeded from a solitary bee, which was hovering over the adjoining shrubs. Chagrined at my discovery, the Baronet turned from me, in displeasure, and went into the house.

Many were the visits, which, in the course of this day, were made to the new hive. It was soon discovered, that the sparrows had been so far impelled by the pressure of *existing circumstances*, as to go abroad in the morning, in quest of necessary food; and it was hoped by the philosophers, that, as is the custom of bees, they would return before the decline of day, to deposit their yellow spoils. But, alas! fallacious is the hope of mortals! The shades of evening arrived, and night succeeded, spreading her dark mantle over the face of Nature, but not a sparrow appeared!

Miss Ardent, whose knowledge extends to all the particulars of rural economy, on perceiving the vexation of her brother, suggested the idea, that the sparrows had probably swarmed on some tree in the neighbourhood, where they might remain in safety till the following day; "and then," continued she, "if they shew any inclination to fly off, they may easily be fixed, by beating the fryingpans, as they do to a swarm of bees."

This hint from Miss Ardent, re-kindled the expiring flame of hope in the breasts of the philosophers.—Next morning, which proved a very rainy one, word was brought, that a number of the fugitives were seen in a hawthorn-tree, at the bottom of the lawn—thither the philosophers instantly repaired, each armed with some culinary instrument, which, as soon as they reached the place, they began to beat, in such a manner as might have arrested the Sun in the entrance of the jaws of the Crocodile!

Lost was the labour of the philosophers! who, in this instance, exerted their talents in vain. Instead of gathering together in a cluster as was expected, no sooner did the discordant sounds from the instruments of the philosophers reach the hearing of the sparrows, than away they flew to another tree. Thither they were again pursued, but still the more noise that was made, the less did the sparrows seem inclined to listen. The master of the bees, declared, that he had never seen a swarm so unmanageable!

Wet, and wearied, Sir Caprice and his learned guests, at length returned into the house. Miss Ardent, and Mr. Axiom, thought it a good opportunity to laugh at the system of the young philosopher; who, on his part, defended the infallibilty of his Idol, by declaring, that the experiment had not been fully made:—that the habits of old sparrows were not easily conquered;—but that young ones, or young birds of any kind, he was still convinced, if taken before their habits were sufficiently formed, would be

found to obey the necessity of existing circumstances, exactly as did the little useful insects, of whose instinctive sagacity, ignorance had said so much.

The hint was not lost upon the Baronet. A reward for nestlings, of every description, was again offered: and again attended with the wished-for success.—Ah! how many loving pairs among the feathered tribes, were, for the sake of this experiment, bereft of their infant families! The groves resounded with the plaints of woe! But little pain did the sorrows of the mourners give to the heart of the young systemist. By his advice the little birds, after having had their bills rubbed with honey, were shut up in the hive, with a portion of the same sweet food, for their subsistance.

On the evening of the third day, which was the conclusion of their destined term of probation, the entrance to the hive was opened, but not a bird came forth; every method was taken to entice them abroad—but in vain. At length, by the assistance

of the servants, their habitation was so far raised, as to enable the philosophers to take a peep within. Sight of horrours! and smell, still worse than the sight! The lifeless corses of the three hundred half-fledged nestlings lay at the bottom of their hive, in a promiscuous heap.—"They have effectually swarmed at last!" said Mr. Axiom.—Neither the Baronet, nor the young philosopher staid to make any remark—but every one putting his fingers to his nose—impelled by the *necessity* of *existing circumstances*, hurried from the dismal scene."

Such, Maandaara, are the illusive phantoms which the all pervading spirit, the sovereign Maya, presents to the perception of metaphysical Philosophers!

May Ganesa, averting calamity, preserve to thee the use of thy senses! And may the poojah performed for thy friend, by the holy Bramins of Almora, preserve his mind from the contamination of systems!

What can I say more?

LETTER XVII.

My time, for these two past days, has been occupied in a manner, that, I hope, will give pleasure to Maandaara.

I have been engaged in translating for your perusal, the greatest part of a very long epistle, with which Doctor Severan has had the goodness to favour his unworthy servant.

According to previous agreement, I transmitted to him, all that I had written to you since my arrival at Ardent-Hall; intreating him to favour me with such strictures upon it, as he thought might be necessary, towards giving me more just ideas upon the subjects of which I had treated.

In his observations, the Doctor does not follow me through the particular systems of

the philosophers; but speaks, in general terms, of the effects produced, by what he calls Scepticism; which, according to the great English Cosha, is the art of doubting. But you shall have it, as nearly as the different idioms of the two languages will permit, in his own words.—After opening his letter with the usual exordium, he thus proceeds:

"Knowing the ardour with which you pursue knowledge, and the strong inclination that impels you to investigate the causes of the different phenomena which presents themselves to your observation, I cheerfully comply with your request.

"The history of Literature is intimately connected with the revolutions of Empires; and among all the rude storms which have assailed it, in none did it suffer more, than in that which it endured, together with the government of ancient Rome. Literature was, by this event, effectually driven from those countries where it had formerly flourished; and, during a long period (emphatically distinguished by our historians, by the

epithet of *dark*) learning was almost completely obliterated. In this æra of ignorance, superstition established her gloomy reign: and when the attention of men was once more turned to literary pursuits, the objects they had to surmount were new and numerous, and of a nature not very easily to be subdued.

"Instead of that free communication, which had formerly been permitted to men, they were now fettered by the tyrannical edicts of Kings and Priests; the investigation of truth being equally hostile to the interests of both. While freedom of discussion was thus restrained, the faculties of the human mind were benumbed, and truth and falsehood were confounded together. Crude speculations were ushered into the world, with the authority of truths; and not only was scepticism propagated by means of the promulgation of opinions, nurtured in ignorance, but encreased from that propensity which the mind has, when newly freed

from restrictions, to rush from one extreme to another.

"From the nature of our constitution (whose spirit is toleration) and from the freedom of our religion from superstition, scepticism has made little progress here, in comparison of what it has done upon the Continent. There, its triumph has been in proportion to the blind obedience exacted to the national superstition, to which men of sense and observation could not, contrary to the dictates of their reason, subscribe; and from that propensity of the human mind, which I have just mentioned, these formed systems for themselves, as distant from the truth, as the doctrines of the high priests of the country were from the pure precepts of Christianity.

"The only species of scepticks that abound in this kingdom, are not thinking, but may be called *talking* scepticks. These are men of shallow understandings, and cold hearts; who, feeling their incapacity to attract attention, by going on in the ordina-

ry path, endeavour to gain it by stating opinions which may astonish their hearers, and acquire them some degree of applause, for their ingenuity and boldness. It may, indeed, be observed of this class, that they take special care never to utter their oracles before those who are capable of entering into argument with them, though they deliver themselves with dogmatical assurance before the ignorant and illiterate.

"But let not my noble friend imagine from this account of scepticism, or from his own penetrating observation on the conduct of the gentleman at Ardent-Hall, that metaphysical inquiry is without its use. Such inquiry expands the powers of the human mind, enlarges the understanding, and by placing the science of morals on a true foundation, tends to encrease the happiness of society.

"Would its professors pursue the same plan of investigation that has been so successfully adopted by natural philosophers, that of first making themselves well ac-

quainted with facts, and thoroughly investigating them, before they draw conclusions, they would perceive the necessity of allowing first principles, which are so self-evident as not to admit of any direct proof. Indeed, I do not hesitate to assert, that almost all the errours of metaphysicians have arisen from their neglect of natural philosophy.—The extreme accuracy, and exact precisions that is requisite in the investigation of the phenomona of the material world, would induce like habits of reasoning in regard to that of the mental: while that Colossus of Scepticism, I mean Atheism, would, by an acquaintance with the works of Nature, be utterly annihilated.

"I have endeavoured to explain myself to my noble friend as clearly as possible on the subject of his letter; and shall only add, that true philosophy is never the companion of arrogance and vanity. While it investigates with assiduity, and pronounces with diffidence; they assert with boldness, and

give the crude conjectures of fancy, for the sound deductions of truth.

"The natural turn of my mind, and still more the objects which have for the greatest part of my life occupied my attention, have effectually precluded me from sceptical opinions, and rendered me callous to the sophistry of their promoters—but it has always appeared to me, that where freedom of discussion is permitted, there scepticism and infidelity will be but little known."

Such, Maandaara, are the opinions of the *natural Philosopher*. The Philosophers at Ardent-Hall declare, that it is a pity so good a man should have so many odd prejudices. I confess, that, to me, who have been accustomed to behold with reverence, the self-inflicted torture of holy men—the noble enthusiasm of the worshippers of system is object of more veneration. It is true, these philosophers hold it not necessary to mortify the body, or to bring the irregular passions under subjection. But what is the severest penance of the most pious Yogee, compared

to the utter dereliction of eternal happiness? By hope, a man is supported through many sorrows, but, on the shrine of his Idol, the philosophick Sannaszee, makes a voluntary sacrifice of even Hope itself—On the system that he worships, his thoughts for ever dwell; on it, his tongue for ever runs: and while it exclusively occupies every avenue to his soul, he, with a superlative degree of modesty, bestows the epithet of *prejudiced enthusiast*, on the votary of Christianity. How amiable is this condescension!

Shall I confess to my friend—that to my weak mind, the enlightening conversation of the philosophers had become so tiresome, as to render the arrival of Lady Grey, and her blooming party, a considerable relief to my wearied spirits? Till then, I was destitute of all resource: Miss Ardent, being too fond of disputing with the philosophers, and too much engaged by them to attend to me; and her Ladyship so entirely engrossed by her darling boy, as to be incapable of attending to any other object. This boy is suffer-

ed to become so troublesome, that it entirely eradicates that benevolent complacency which one is accustomed to feel at the sight of infant innocence. His parents behold the capriciousness of his desires increase with gratification, and the irrascibility of his temper receive fuel from satiety; yet do they continue to pamper the over-pampered appetite, and to indulge each caprice of the wayward fancy, in full expectation, that, in the *age of reason*, he will be able to exercise the virtue of self-control!—Yes, Maandaara, when, from the *pressure* of *existing circumstances*, sparrows are taught to make honey, then shall the passions, which have been fanned into a flame by the breath of indulgence, listen to the voice of Moderation!

You may, perhaps, imagine, that the society of a young and lovely female, such as is Miss Julia Ardent, would be a dangerous trial to a man of my sensibility. But, alas! my friend, you know not how effectually the mixture of insipidity and haughtiness

can blunt the arrows of Cama! It is, perhaps, for this reason, and to preserve the hearts of young men from the influence of female charms, that these qualities are so carefully instilled at the seminaries of female education, which were described in such true colours by the good Bramin Sheermaal. I was, at that time, too much blinded by the mists of ignorance, to give credit to his report.—I had read the Christian Shaster, and was it not natural for me to suppose, that all who called themselves Christians, were guided by its precepts? From it I learned, that Christian women were not prohibited from the cultivation of their understandings; and how could I conceive, that fashion should lead them to relinquish so glorious a privilege? How could I imagine, that Christian parents should be so much afraid of the improvement of their female offspring, as to give encouragement to seminaries formed on purpose for the exclusion of knowledge? It is true, the information of Sheermaal might have instructed me in these

things, but to the heart that is filled with prejudice, Wisdom lifteth up her voice in vain.

Nothing but experience could have convinced me, that the cultivation of the rational faculties, should, among the Christian women of England, be so rare, that no sooner can one of them emerge from the depths of ignorance, than she is suspected of assuming the airs of self-importance and conceit. If she has the knowledge of a school-boy, she is thought vain of her learning. Nor are there many men of sense among the Christians, who would not prefer to the conversation of such a woman, the impertinent tattle of the frivolous, the capricious, and the ignorant. Nor is this much to be wondered at, when we consider, that, by the pains taken, from the earliest infancy, to sap the foundation of every solid improvement, the imagination becomes so much stronger than the judgment, that of the small number of females who, under all the disadvantages of custom and prejudice, dare to distinguish

themselves by the cultivation of their talents, few should do more than exchange one folly for another:—substitute the love of theory, for the love of dress—or an admiration of the mental gewgaws of flimsy sentiment, and high sounding declamation, for that of trifles of another kind.

But though I confess my errour, and acknowledge, that I deceived myself in extending my notions of Christianity to every Christian, and of excellence to every female of England, I still see some who amply justify the expectations that were formed by my sanguine mind. In Lady Grey and her daughters, I find all that I had expected from the females of their country; all that my friend Severan had described.

With them, arrived the two youngest daughters of Sir Caprice Ardent, one of whom has received her education under the care of Lady Grey, while the other has to her Aunt, Miss Ardent, been indebted for her instruction. At first sight,

one is struck with the similarity of their features. They are both beauteous as the opening rose-bud, when the dew of morning trembles on its leaf. The eyes of each, sparkling with vivacity, are dazzling as a bright dagger suddenly unsheathed. They are both shaped by the hand of elegance, and both move with the same degree of grace. Yet, notwithstanding this similarity, the opposite characters impressed by education is visible in each.—While over the graces of Miss Caroline, is thrown the bewitching veil of timidity, and her every action is bound in the silken fetters of decorum; the adopted daughter of Miss Ardent speaks her sentiments with an energy that has never known restraint. Though open to conviction, and ready to confess errour with the candour of a noble mind, she yields less to the authority of persons, than to that of reason; and it is easy to perceive, has been early taught, that to be weak, and to be amiable, are two very different things.

An incident which occurred to the three sisters, in the course of their morning's walk, will serve to illustrate these observations upon their characters.

It appears, that having strayed into a narrow lane, they were frightened at the appearance of a horse and cart, coming towards them so quickly, as to leave them no other method of escaping, than to climb a steep bank, and get over the pailing into their father's park. Miss Olivia, with the activity of an Antelope, led the way, and, with some difficulty, assisted her sisters to follow her example. Just as she had prevailed upon the terrified Miss Julia, who long insisted upon the impossibility of her making the attempt, they beheld near them an old man, who, excited by the screams and promised rewards of Miss Julia, attempted to lay hold of the horses. To stop them, his feeble efforts were ineffectual; the animals were too strong, and too spirited, to be managed by his aged arm. After a short struggle, the horses sprung over him, and in

a moment the mangled and bleeding body was discovered lying, to all appearance, lifeless, in the track which the cart had passed.

Miss Julia redoubled her efforts to escape; she succeeded, and flew to the house, which she no sooner reached, than, as is customary with young ladies upon such occasions, she fainted away. When she had fainted for a decent length of time, she screamed, laughed, and cried alternately, and continued long enough in the second stage of fright, called *An Hysterick Fit*, to draw round her the greatest part of the family. Indeed, there was full employment for them all. One held to her nose a bunch of burnt feathers; another chafed her temples with a drug, called Hartshorn; a third held to her lips drops and cordials, while the rest ran about the room, opening the windows, ringing the bells, and giving directions to the servants.

While we were thus engaged, in flew Miss Olivia. But what a figure! The few tattered remnants of her muslin robe,

besmeared with blood, streamed in the air; eagerness sparkled in her eyes, and an unspeakable glow of ardour animated her countenance. Totally unconcerned for her sister, on whom indeed she seemed to dart a look of contempt, she hastily snatched the hartshorn, and the cordials, and desiring, with a tone of authority, all the men to follow her, she again flew off, with the swiftness of a bird of Paradise, who has been frightened by the voice of the hunter.

Miss Julia was left to recover as she could. Every soul deserted her. Men and maids, philosophers and footmen, all hurried after the fair Olivia; who, like the meteor which floats on the dark-bosomed cloud of evening, was seen gliding before us. At length we reached the lane, and there, seated on the ground, we beheld the twin-sister of Olivia. Her fair arms supported the unfortunate old man, whose wounded head reclined upon her lap. His wounds were, however, bound up. The robe of Olivia, having been torn in pieces for the

purpose. And now, with a tenderness which equalled her activity, she knelt at the old man's side, and carried to his pale lips the cordials she had, with so little ceremony, snatched from her sister. The old man at length so far revived, as to pronounce, with feeble but impressive accents, the blessings of his God on the angel forms who had saved his life. He was with all possible care, by the direction of the two Ladies, carried up to the house. A surgeon was immediately sent for, who, on examining his wounds, declared them to be of such a nature, that if he had not received the assistance bestowed upon him by the two Ladies, he must inevitably have perished. "Then," cried the lovely Caroline, "it is to my sister Olivia, that he owes his life!—But for her, I should have followed my sister Julia into the house, to call for help; it was Olivia alone, who had the courage to return to him, and the presence of mind to afford him relief." "No, Caroline;" replied Olivia, "without you, I could

have done nothing. When I looked back, and saw how the poor man bled, I knew he could not live without assistance; but it was you, by whom the assistance was principally bestowed." "Don't speak any more about it, for Heaven's sake!" cried Miss Julia; "the very thought of it makes me sick. I would not have looked at him, for a thousand worlds! I wonder how you could have so little sensibility!"

"Sensibility, my dear niece," said Lady Grey, "is but too often another word for selfishness. Believe me, that that sensibility which turns with disgust from the sight of misery it has the power to relieve, is not of the right kind. To weep at the imaginary tale of sorrow exhibited in a Novel or a Tragedy, is to indulge a feeling in which there is neither vice nor virtue: but when the compassion which touches the heart, leads the hands to afford relief, and benevolence becomes a principle of action; it is then, and then only, that it is truly commendable." "I perceive that your Ladyship

has studied Mr. Hume's Principles of General Utility," said Mr. Axiom. "No," said Mr. Puzzledorf; "it is evident, her Ladyship has taken her opinions from *my Essay on the Eternal and Necessary Fitness and Congruity of Things.*" "I have taken them," said her Ladyship, "from the doctrines and examples of Jesus Christ and his Apostles."

In this life, "composed of good and evil," this younger sister of the Baronet has had her share of calamity. Her marriage with Sir Philip Grey, was an union of mutual affection, founded on mutual esteem, and productive of mutual felicity.

Though a Baronet, his estate was not extensive; and from it, a numerous family of brothers and sisters were to be provided with fortunes, suited to their birth. Sir Philip and his Lady, having the same views and opinions, easily settled the plan of their future life. They took the management of their estate into their own hands: taste and elegance became a substitute for splendour: and the propriety of domestick arrangement,

amply compensated for the absence of a few articles of superfluous luxury. But though they retrenched in ostentation, they decreased not in hospitality; their house was the refuge of the distressed, the home of merit, and the central point of all the genius and the talent which the surrounding country could boast. In addition to the care of their fortune, they took upon themselves the sole care of the education of their children.—But, notwithstanding all these avocations, they still found time for the pursuit of literature, for which their taste remained undiminished. Lady Grey was not only (as is universally the custom in this country*) the companion of her husband's table—but the partner of his studies; and by him, her opinions were as much respected, as her person was beloved.

* It is by some of the Hindoo authors, mentioned as one of the indispensible qualities of a good wife—"that she never presumes to eat, until her husband has finished."

Years rolled on, and each returning season saw an increase of the happiness of this well-matched pair. But who can give stability to the felicity of mortals? While yet in the prime of life, this amiable and happy husband was seized by the ruthless hand of disease, in whose rude grasp, the vigour of life was blasted, and the gay hopes of future enjoyment dashed on the rocks of disappointment. His senses, of which he suffered a temporary deprivation, were gradually restored; but the wheels of life were clogged; the vital fluid stagnated in the veins, or moved with such lingering and unequal pace, as was unequal to the re-animation of the palsied limbs: nor did he ever recover a sufficient degree of strength, to enable him to quit his apartment. In such a situation, in vain would a man have looked for consolation to the pretty face of a fool. In vain would he have expected it from the trifling accomplishments, to the acquirement of which, the most precious years of life are commonly devoted. Alas!

though Lady Grey could have spoken French with the fluency of a Parisian; though she could have danced with the grace of an angel; though she could have painted a flower, or a butterfly, even without the assistance of her drawing-master, and run over the keys of her harpsichord with the most astonishing rapidity—little comfort would it have given to the heart of her sick husband.

In an understanding enriched by the accumulations of Wisdom, a temper regulated by the precepts of Christianity, and a heart replete with tenderness, Sir Philip found a more solid resource. By these endowments, was his Lady enabled to manage the affairs of her family, and the concerns of his estate; to watch over the education of her children; and, by the unremitting attentions of endearing affection, to cheer the spirits that were broken by confinement, and soothe the sufferings of a bed of pain. Nor was the performance of these multifarious duties the sudden effect of a short-lived energy. During

the six years in which her husband lingered under the partial dominion of death, the fortitude of his lady remained unshaken, her perseverance unabated, and when at length his soul was suffered to depart from the decayed mansion of mortality, though her heart was possessed with too much sensibility, not to feel with sorrow the stroke of separation, the assured hope of a re union with the object of her affections, in the regions of immortality, afforded consolation to her wounded mind.—Yes, Maandaara, notwithstanding all I have said in favour of this excellent woman, truth obliges me to confess, that the powers of her mind are not sufficiently enlarged to embrace the doctrines of Atheism! She is blind enough, not to perceive the evident superiority of any of the systems of the philosophers to the Christian faith; and weakly asserts, that if all that was taught by Jesus Christ and his Apostles, was generally practised, it would be no great injury to the happiness of society.—She takes great pleasure in the contempla-

tion of a future state, and carries her *prejudices* so far, as to declare, that she considers the account of it, as given in Scripture, as little less easy of belief, than the system of Mr. Puzzledorf; and that she finds it more satisfactory to rest her hopes on the promises of her Saviour, than on the permanent existence of the little imperishable stamina at the top of the nose!!

Not contented with making the precepts and doctrines of Christianity the guide of her own conduct, she has endeavoured to instill them into the minds of her children; and so well has she succeeded, that her eldest son, at the age of nineteen, though possessed of an uncommon degree of learning, sense, and spirit—is not ashamed to confess that he is a Christian!

Alas! my friend, how shall I inform you of the events of this morning?—The num-

ber of philosophers is diminished! The promising sprout of Infidelity, whose early genius gave such hopes of future greatness—he, by the prowess of whose pen, it was expected that religion should be routed from the world—the nephew of Doctor Sceptick—this morning, took the privilege of a philosopher, and shot himself through the head!

As I find upon inquiry, that this is a privilege which is often claimed, and a practice, that is very common with the philosophers of England, I suppose it is found to be conducive to general utility, and agreeable to the eternal and necessary congruity and fitness of things.

The *existing circumstances* which impelled this young man to make so philosophical an exit, have been, to all appearance, fully explained; and as you may have some curiosity concerning them, I shall briefly state them for your perusal.

It appears that his father, a man of rigid morals and austere devotion, who lived in

the exercise of much piety towards God, and much charity to his fellow-creatures, some years ago, received into his family the orphan niece of his wife. She was educated with his own children, and shared with them the benefit of his instructions and the tenderness of his paternal love. Her beauty made an early impression upon the heart of her cousin, and such was her merit in the eyes of the old man, that, preferring the happiness of his son, to the aggrandizement of his family, he consented that their union should take place, as soon as the young man should have attained his one and twentieth year. It was agreed, that he should employ the interval in what is called an Attendance upon the Temple; and, according to a previous invitation from his uncle, Doctor Sceptick, should during that period take up his residence at his house, in the capital.—There the young man had not long resided, till a new light burst upon his eyes; he saw things as he had never seen them before: saw that religion was a bug-bear, made to

keep the vulgar in awe:—saw that his father was a fool; and, as I have before mentioned, learnt to laugh at his prejudices and his piety, in a very edifying manner.

In the summer, he returned into the country; found his cousin lovely and affectionate as ever, and had no great difficulty in initiating her into all the mysteries of Scepticism. They both found it a charming thing to be so much wiser than their instructors; and wondered they could so long have been blinded by prejudices, whose absurdities were so obvious. The young man went again to town, became every day more enlightened, and soon discovered that marriage was a piece of priest-craft—an ignoble bondage—a chain which no *man of honour* should submit to wear.

He hastened to return to the country, to communicate to his cousin this important discovery. Finding some difficulty in convincing her understanding of the truth of this new doctrine, he applied to the softness of her heart; he pretended to doubt of her

affection, appealed to her generosity, and—completed her ruin.

Still the poor girl was not sufficiently convinced of the propriety of her conduct, not to entertain some doubts and apprehensions, which the young philosopher soon grew tired of hearing. Finding that their connexion could not be much longer concealed, she grew more importunate, and he listened to her importunity with increased indifference. At length, to avoid her remonstrances, he came to Ardent-Hall, where he had been introduced by his Uncle, who made the offer of his services to assist Sir Caprice in writing his Book upon the *Supremacy of Reason*, with which the Baronet is soon to enlighten the world.—The young man willingly engaged in the task. But fatal are the effects of early prejudices to the peace of a philosopher! His thoughts became gloomy; his speech has often of late been incoherent; and every action betrayed the restlessness of a mind at war with itself. Even his zeal against the advocates of

Christianity, had in it a degree of bitterness which shewed that they still retained an authority over his mind, at which, though his pride revolted, his understanding could not conquer.

For the last few days, he had appeared to exert more than usual spirits. He laughed, when he had no occasion; talked, when he had nothing to say; and sedulously sought the company of the Ladies, whom he had before neglected with the frigidity of indifference. Yesterday evening, his spirits were raised to a pitch which gave reason to suspect intoxication. When he retired to his chamber, it appears that he did not go to bed, but employed himself in writing letters to his father, all of which he had again torn, and scattered about the room. At four o'clock in the morning, the report of a pistol was heard: the family were instantly alarmed; the door of his chamber was broken open; and, on entering it, the first object that presented itself to view, was the lifeless

corse of the young philosopher, extended on the floor.

On the table at which he had been writing, lay two letters. The first was from his father, and feelingly descriptive of the agony of a parent's heart, on the first discovery of a son's unworthiness. The other was from his cousin. It pourtrayed the picture of a virtuous mind, struggling with the dread of infamy, bitterly regretting the loss of peace and self-respect, and gently reproaching the author of its calamities, for depriving her of that hope which is the resource of the wretched, the comfort of the penitent, and the sovereign balm for the evils of life! "To her," she said, "hope was a shadow, which had passed away. Once, there was a time, when she could have smiled at calamity, endured the severity of pain with unshrinking resignation, and, supported by faith, have cheerfully resigned her soul into the bosom of her Creator. Now, doubt and darkness sat upon the realm of death; she feared to die, but she had not courage to

live.—Death," she said, "was the only refuge of despair; to it she fled, to save her from the reproaches of the world, and the torments of her own perturbed mind"—and with an affecting apostrophe to the days *of* unspotted innocence, this unhappy creature concludes her melancholy epistle; which, it seems, she had no sooner written, than she put an end to her existence, by plunging into the sea!

Such has been the effects of performing poojah to System, in the family of the Scepticks!

Ah! how little do the Christians of this country consider the nature and extent *of* the obligations they are under to those enlightened men, whose indefatigable endeavour it is, to free them from the narrow prejudices of their religion! O, ye incomparable moralists, who so freely blow out your own brains, from a sense of *general utility*, little doth the world consider how much it is indebted to your labours!

Reverence to Ganesa!

THE previous arguments of the philosophers in praise of suicide, had not sufficiently enlightened the minds of the family of Ardent-Hall, to prevent their regarding the death of young Sceptick as a melancholy catastrophe! Though the difference of character gave a variety to the expression of their feelings, all appeared to feel. The shock was universal.

The worshippers of System, and the votaries of Christianity, appeared, indeed, to be affected in a very opposite manner. The former, who had, till this event, been so clamorous in support of the pretensions of their Idols, were all at once struck dumb. Not one appeal was now made to *existing circumstances*. Not one ray of hope darted from *the age of reason*. Nor did either *gene-*

ral utility, or the *fitness of things*, appear in this juncture, to afford any comfort to their votaries. But while the lips of the philosophers were sealed in silence, those of the Christian religionists were opened. Their prejudices, indeed, appeared to have gained fresh strength: these *prejudices*, which are calculated to foster the sensibility of the tender heart, and to encrease the feelings of sympathy, seemed likewise endowed with power to support their votaries in the hour of affliction, to soften the rigour of anguish, and to preserve from the tyranny of despair.

It must be confessed, that Lady Grey, amiable as she is, had not sufficient greatness of mind to applaud the heroism of the young philosopher, or to speak of his last action—but with a mixture of pity, horrour, and regret. With much feeling, did she deplore his having ever imbibed the *liberal opinions* that led to the destruction of his wife; the murder of his child; his own death, and the misery of his family.

The consolation of that unhappy family was the first object of her concern. Having seen Lady Ardent and the young Ladies set off for the house of a friend, to which they had been invited on the first accounts of the melancholy event; she hastened to the house of affliction; there to mingle the tears of sympathy; to speak comfort to the wounded heart; and, by sharing in its sorrows, to lessen their severity.—Such, Maandaara, are the offices pointed out by the prejudices of Christianity!

Deeming it improper at such a juncture, to incommode the family by the presence of a stranger, I took my leave of Sir Caprice Ardent, and left the Hall, impressed with a deep sense of the kindness and hospitality I had experienced beneath its roof.

Full of melancholy, I proceeded, without having fully determined on the route I was to pursue. To London, I was averse to return, and yet knew not how otherwise to dispose of myself. As I was debating this point with myself, while the horses were

putting to my carriage, at the third stage of my journey, a chaise drove up to the Inn. From it alighted a gentleman—but, O ye Gods of my fathers! what was my surprize, on beholding, in this gentleman, my former guest, Mr. Denbeigh, the friend of Percy! He, who had at Chunar, loaded me with so many marks of kindness and affection! Soon as the flutter of spirits which always accompanies an unexpected meeting, was a little subsided, he took from his port-folio a packet, on which I soon recognized the hand-writing of Maandaara. How did my heart beat at the sight! I tear open the seals —I read. I hear of the welfare of my friend, of the health of my child. Ah! my son! my son! What tender emotions does the mention of thy name raise in my bosom! When shall the soft cheek of my child be patted by his father's hand? When shall my ears be gratified by the delicious musick of my darling's gentle voice? Detested spirit of curiosity! too long have I sacrific-

ed to thee the truest, sweetest joys, that gem the period of existence!

My heart is too full to proceed. May He, who is Lord of the Keepers of the eight corners of the World, preserve thee! May the adored wife of Veeshnu be the friend of my child!!

Denbeigh, at the time I met him, was on his way to the place of his nativity. He requested me to accompany him to his father's house; and found in me no disposition to reject a proposal so agreeable to my inclination. We proceeded together in the same carriage. Conversed of India—of our friends at Calcutta:—talked of all the little incidents that had occurred during my residence in that city; the most trivial of which, appeared interesting to the memory, on account of the pleasing ideas with which it was associated. Swiftly flew the wheels of

our chariot, but more swiftly flew the rolling hours, which were occupied by this sort of conversation.

About noon, on the second day of our journey, we, by the direction of Denbeigh, struck into a narrow bye-road, which following the course of a clear stream, winded through the midst of a narrow valley. As we entered upon this road, the agitation of my companion became apparent. Every object that we passed, caused his heart to heave with tender emotion. In every shrub he recognised an old acquaintance, and in every tree he seemed to discover a long lost friend. "Let us stop here," said he, at a turn of the road: "the bridge for carriages is half a mile off, but I can take you a nearer way." So saying, he leaped out of the carriage, and I followed his example. My friend surveyed the scene around, and the soft tear of delight glistened in his eyes. "There," said he, "stands the old thorn, which, at the close of evening, I used to pass with such hasty steps, not daring to

look behind, from terrour of the fairies, who were said to hold their nightly revels beneath its boughs. Ah! there is the wood, whose filberts were so tempting. There the pool, where I first ventured to beat the wave with my feeble arm. On the outstretched branch of yonder beach, was suspended the swing, in which I have so often tossed my little sisters, who, half pleased and half afraid squalled and laughed by turns, as they were made to fly through the yielding air."

We had now reached a little rustick gate leading into an orchard, in one of the broad walks of which, we beheld an aged pair, enjoying the smiles of the meridian Sun. A little boy and girl sported beside them joyously picking up the apples, that lay hidden in the grass.

Our approach was at length perceived. The old gentleman paused, and leaning on his staff, endeavoured to recognize us. The emotion of Douglas encreased.—He bounded forward—and taking a hand of each—

while the bursting sensations of his heart choaked his utterance—gazed for a moment on the revered faces of his parents, and in the next, was in their arms. His poor mother could not, for a few minutes, reconcile herself to the darkness of his complexion, which fourteen years spent beneath the lustre of an Indian sky had changed from the fair red and white, such as now adorns the face of his little nephew, to the deep brown shade, that marks the European Asiatick. The good Lady gently pushed him from her, to examine more minutely the features whose more delicate lines were engraven on her memory. He smiled.—In that smile, she recognized the peculiar expression of her darling's face, and fondly pressed him to her maternal bosom.

During this scene, I stood a silent and unobserved spectator; nor was it till after a considerable length of time, that Denbeigh sufficiently recollected himself to introduce me to his parents. To be called the friend of their son, ensured my welcome; but, that

I might not be any restraint on their conversation, I attached myself to the little folks, to whom Uncle Henry was no more than any other stranger.

As we approached the house, I observed, at an open window which fronts the orchard, a lovely girl, who seemed to view the party with a greater degree of interest, than curiosity alone could possibly inspire. Twice she came to the door, and twice returned irresolute. At length, she was observed by one of my little companions, who runing towards her, called out, Uncle Henry is come! Uncle Henry is come! the words gave wings to her willing feet, she flew down the walk, and in a minute her beauteous face was hid in the bosom of her brother.

The shrill voice of my little friend, had reached farther than the parlour. By the time we entered the Hall, the servants were assembled.—The old nurse was the first who pressed forward to salute the stranger—by whom she was received with the kindness due to her affection and fidelity. Two

other domestick companions of his youth still remained in the family: tears spoke the sincerity of the many welcomes they bestowed on the traveller; while the hearty good will with which he received their salutations, gave a convincing proof, that neither time nor distance had changed the dispositions of his heart.

Mr. Denbeigh, with that delicacy of attention which is peculiar to a few chosen minds, provided for me an apartment in a detached house, where my Hindoo servants were furnished with every requisite for preparing our simple meals according to the religion and customs of our country. To this apartment I retired during the dining hour of the family; and by the time I returned, I found that an acquisition had been made to the happy party of united friends, by the arrival of the two married daughters of Mr. Denbeigh, accompanied by the husband of the eldest. The countenance of this gentleman justified the character given him by Denbeigh, of worth and good-nature. He

was bred to business, and has by industry and application, obtained an ample share of the gifts of fortune, which he enjoys with cheerfulness, and bestows with the frankness of a generous heart. His wife seems happy in his affection, and in the enjoyment of a degree of good temper equal to his own.

The countenance of the second sister bears a stronger resemblance to that of my friend; it speaks a soul endowed with superiour powers; a more refined sensibility, a more lively perception, a more cultivated taste. When the arrival of her husband (who had been detained by the business of his profession, which is that of a Physician) was announced, I marked the emotion of her spirits. She presented him to her brother, with an air that seemed to demand his approbation of her choice; nor was she disappointed: the appearance of the young man was too prepossessing to fail of making an immediate interest in the favour of my friend, whose sentiments were no sooner perceived by his sister, who eagerly watch-

ed them in the expression of his countenance, than her eyes sparkled with delight. In a few minutes more, my friend had the pleasure of embracing his two brothers: the eldest, who is a year his senior, is now priest of the neighbouring village. A man of mild aspect, and gentle manners. At an early age, he made a sacrifice of ambition to love, and married a young woman, whose dower was made up of beauty and good temper.

Of the numerous offspring with which she has presented him, the two eldest reside with their grandfather—the youngest has but two days seen the light; and all the others their uncles have promised to provide for. So that the good man looks with a smiling aspect upon futurity.

The youngest brother of my friend, is a Professor of the Art of Surgery. A dapper little gentleman, with a smart wit, and perfumed handkerchief. His brother Henry says, he is a little affected by a disorder called *Puppyism*, but that he has sufficient

stamina in his constitution to conquer the disease; which, it seems, is a very common one at his time of life.

Never did Calli,* in the progress of his eventful journey, behold a happier circle than that which now surrounded the hearth of Mr. Denbeigh. When I saw them sit down at the supper-table, I began to think the custom of social meals not altogether so ridiculous as I had hitherto considered it. At the conclusion of the repast, the cordial wish of health was mutually exchanged; and a glass filled with generous wine, was pressed to the lips of each, in token of sincerity. The cheerful song went round: every voice was in unison to strains of joy, and every countenance was irradiated with the smile of satisfaction. Before they parted for the night, the old gentleman, according to a very strange custom of his own, knelt down in the middle of his family, and while the tear of joy strayed down his venerable

* Time.

cheeks, offered up the sacrifice of thanksgiving to the throne of the Eternal!!

Alas! this poor gentleman is not sufficiently enlightened to perform poojah to System. He has never been convinced, that vice and virtue are only qualities of imagination; and is deplorably ignorant of all theories, save that of a good conscience. —Nor has his wife advanced one step farther than himself, towards throwing off the prejudices of Christianity.—And what is still worse—the manner in which they have rivetted these prejudices in the minds of their children, scarcely admits a hope, that any of them will ever become converts to Atheism, or have sufficient spirit to exchange the morality of their Shaster, for the doctrine of external circumstances. On making inquiry of my friend concerning the cause of this phenomena, he informed me, that his father and mother, who were of different sects of Christians, agreed, that the religion taught their children should not be indebted for its support to the peculiar dog-

mas of either; but should chiefly rest on the authority of that Shaster, which has so deeply incurred the displeasure of the philosophers.—His mother was the daughter of a priest of the sect of Dissenters, who had bestowed such particular pains on the cultivation of her understanding, as actually qualified her for conducting the education of her own children.

It is, perhaps, to this uncommon and extraordinary circumstance, that the children of Mr. Denbeigh are indebted for many of those peculiarities which at present distinguish their characters. It is from this cause, that the daughters have become learned, without losing their humility: that they are gay, without being frivolous: that in conversation, their sprightliness is free from the lightness of vanity, and their seriousness from the arrogance of self-conceit. Mrs. Denbeigh, not considering the preservation of ignorance absolutely necessary towards the perfection of the female character, never sent her daughters to the seminaries that

are established for that purpose, but suffered them from infancy to partake with their brothers in every advantage of solid instruction.—Being early taught to make a just estimate of things, they learned how to value the performance of every duty; nor was their attention towards those annexed by custom to their situation, lessened from a consideration of their simplicity. In their minds the torch of knowledge was too fully lit, to lead to the dangerous path of singularity, into which unwary females have by its feeble glimmering been so oft betrayed. I can almost venture to assert, that the blooming Emma at this moment manages the domestick economy of her father's house, with as much prudence and activity as could be expected from the most ignorant and accomplished female that ever issued from a *genteel boarding-school.* That she is as dutiful, as affectionate, as obedient to her parents, as if she had never looked into any book but a Novel; and will regard their memory with as much filial veneration, as if

they had never furnished her mind with an idea, or taught her any other duty, save how to dress and play at cards!!

THE week that has elapsed since my arrival at Violet-Dale, has been spent in alternate visits to the sons, and sons-in-laws of Mr. Denbeigh. As the most beautiful symmetry of feature eludes the skill of the painter, so do the quiet satisfactions of life, though sources of the truest pleasure, bid defiance to the powers of description: I shall therefore of this week only mention one little incident, which pleased, in spite of its simplicity.

On the second day after our arrival, while Mr. and Mrs. Denbeigh, and the lovely Emma, were listening, with looks of complacency and delight, to the recital made by my friend of some of his adventures in India, Mr. Denbeigh was informed,

that a person wanted to speak with him. It was a country-man, who being by universal consent, admitted into the parlour, declared his business. It was, to pay to the old gentleman a small sum of money, which, it appeared, had been lent, with little prospect of return. He received for his punctuality, the encouragement of praise; and Emma, unbidden, arose from her embroidery, to present him some wine for himself, and sweet-cake to take home to his children. The poor man was, by this kindness, emboldened to loquacity. "Yes," said he to Mr. Denbeigh, "I defy the whole world to say, that Gilbert Grub ever remained one hour in any man's debt, after he was able to get out of it. And as your honour was so good to me in my necessity, and lent to me when no one else would, it was good reason to pay your honour first. But, perhaps, you have not heard of the strange behaviour of Mr. Darnley?"

"Darnley!" repeated Emma, suspending her work to listen.

"What of Mr. Darnley?" said Mr. Denbeigh.

"Why, Sir, you must know," said the peasant, "that Old Benjamin Grub, who lived in one of Mr. Darnley's free cottages, to whom, I am sure both your honour and these two good ladies have given many and many a shilling, died on Friday was eight days; and on opening his will, who do you think he should have left his sole heir, but Mr. Darnley?"

"What could the poor creature have to leave?" said Mrs. Denbeigh. "He was the very picture of wretchedness."

"Aye, so he was," returned the garrulous old man; "and that was the very way he took to scrape together such a mine of wealth. Would you believe it, Madam? In the very rags that covered him, fifty golden guineas were concealed, and a hundred more were found in his house; but no matter for that, if it had been ten times as much, it all went to Mr. Darnley.—And though to be sure, we could not blame him

for taking it—yet some of us thought it main hard, that while so many of his own flesh and blood were in a starving condition, all this store of wealth should go to one who had enough of his own.

"But, whilst his own relations left him to starve, had he not been supported by Mr. Darnley's bounty?" said Mr. Denbeigh.

"Aye, that is true," said the peasant: "but, as old Sam Grub of the Mill says, if any one of us had a-known of his wealth, we would all have been as kind to him as the 'Squire."

"Mr. Darnley ought certainly to have made some present to the old man's relations," said Mr. Denbeigh. "Aye, Sir, I thought he might ha' given some small thing among us," said the peasant; "but never could have imagined, that he would have behaved in the way he did."

"Go on," said Mr. Douglas, knitting his brows.

The cheek of Emma grew pale: she took up her needle, but remained in the attitude of attention, while the peasant proceeded.

"You must know, Sir, that after having had a long confabulation with the Sexton, who is himself a Grub, the first thing the 'Squire did, was to send for all the Grubs in the parish, man and woman, to come to the funeral. Some of us were so much stomached, that we did not much like to go. But, says I, though Benjamin has been unnatural to us, that is no reason that we should be unnatural to him. So we all went yesterday morning, at the hour appointed, and found all things prepared for the funeral—and a gallant funeral it was; it would have done good to the heart of any of his friends to have seen it. When we returned from the church-yard, Mr. Darnley, who was himself chief mourner, desired us all to go back with him to Ben's Cottage, where wine was poured out for us by Mr. Darnley's butler, who is himself a very grand gentleman.—When we had drank a glass, Mr. Darnley got up and said—'My friends,' says he, 'I hope none of you will have any cause to repent the choice made by your kinsman of

a trustee, for the distribution of his property, for I cannot look upon his Will in any other light.—Here are twenty of you present. Ten grand-children of his brothers, and as many descendants from his Uncles. To the first I have alloted ten guineas each, to the latter five, which disposes of the whole hundred and fifty found in his possession—and I hope it is a division with which you will all be satisfied.' We all cried out with one voice, that his honour was too good! too generous! that he should, at least, keep one half to himself. 'God forbid!' said he, 'that I should take a farthing, that my conscience told me, was the property of another!'—And he looked so pleased, and so good humoured! and we were all so astounded with delight! for your honour must know, that ten guineas to a poor man, is a mighty sum! Ah! your honour can have no notion what it is, when a man has been working from hand to mouth, now scrambling to get out of debt, and then falling back

into poverty —what it is to be at once, as I may say, set above the world!"

The eyes of Emma glistened with delight, and the sweet tint of the opening rose-bud again mantled over her lovely cheek.—The peasant continued—

"Well, Sir, we were scarcely come to our senses, as I may say, when Farmer Stubble's cart came to the door, with old Martha Grub, who kept the penny-school on the Green Common, and who broke her leg last year on going up to the henroost. We had every one of us forgotten old Martha, but were all willing to club her share. 'No, no,' said the 'squire; 'you must all keep what you have got, it was my fault, for not being better informed; but Martha shall be no loser, said he; I will give her five guineas out of my own pocket!'—Who would have thought he would have behaved in such a manner?"

"It was indeed acting very handsomely," said Mr. Denbeigh.

"Noble, generous Darnley!" said Emma. "It is just what I would have expected from him!"

The old man took his leave.—"And pray," says my friend, as soon as he was gone, "who is Mr. Darnley? Is it he whom I well remember breaking down your fences, in following his fox hounds?" "No, no," returned Mr. Denbeigh, "that was the elder brother of this Darnley, who was then, in obedience to the will of his father, preparing for the Bar. He was, as you have just heard, too fond of Justice, to be very partial to the practice of the law; and on the death of that elder brother, who broke his neck one morning in hunting, he came down to Darnley-Lodge, where he has ever since resided.

"He was soon discovered to be a very strange, whimsical sort of a creature, by the neighbouring 'Squires.—The sufferings of a poor timorous animal, harassed by fatigue, and tortured by the agonizing sensations of excessive fear, were not necessary for his

amusement. He could enjoy much pleasure in walking over a fine country, without being the butcher of either hare or partridge: and take delight in rambling by the side of our river, though his heart never felt the triumph of beholding the dying struggles of a poor trout, or exulted in its writhing agony while tearing the barbed dart from its lacerated entrails, His mind sought for other objects of gratification. The study of Mineralogy and Botany, an exquisite relish for the beauties of Nature, refined by an acquaintance with the sister arts of Poetry and Painting, gave sufficient interest to the rural scenery, without any aid from the misery of inoffensive animals. To the amusements of elegant Literature, he has added those of Agricultural improvement. He comes here to take my advice about the latter; and on the former, I believe, he comes to consult Emma, who will give you the best account of his taste."

Emma at that moment very suddenly recollected something she had left in her

own room, for which she went in great haste, and the old Gentleman proceeded. "At the time that our acquaintance with Mr. Darnley commenced, Emma was in her seventeenth year. He found her mind more cultivated than is common with girls of that age, and took delight in improving her already formed taste. His conversation was far superiour, in point of elegance and information, to that of any person she had ever met with: besides, it must be confessed, that there is a charm in the manners of a man who has seen something of the world, and been accustomed to move in the upper circles of life, which is very captivating to a delicate mind. I saw the impression that was made on my poor Emma's, and trembled for the peace of my sweet child. I feared, that by acquiring a taste for that sort of refinement of sentiment and manners, which is so rarely to be met with in the country, she might injure her future happiness. I know not if Darnley perceived my uneasiness, but he soon took an opportunity

of speaking to me on the subject. He told me, that his affection for my daughter should long ago have led him to make proposals to me on her account, but that the disparity of their ages had rendered him anxious to make such an interest in her esteem, as might supply the place of that romantick passion, which, during the reign of fancy, is deemed essential to nuptial happiness. I approved of his conduct, and told him, that in regard to my daughters, I had laid down a rule to which I had invariably adhered, and that was, never to give my consent to their entering into any engagement, before they had entered their twentieth year."

"Then you did not intend they should marry Nabobs," said my friend. "Why, we Indians never think of any thing beyond sixteen."

"Then you do not think of the blessing of mutual happiness," said his father. "Why not?" returned my friend. "*We* think of happiness in the possession of youth and

beauty; and our young wives think of it in the enjoyment of our fortunes.—Is not this being mutually happy?" "Short-lived happiness!" rejoined his father, "which is certainly extinguished by satiety, and probably succeeded by disgust.—The first sight sympathy of souls," continued Mr. Denbeigh, "is laughed at by any well educated girl; but such an union of minds as includes a similarity of taste and sentiment;—such a degree of esteem as is essential to mutual confidence, is, in my opinion, absolutely necessary between two people, who are to be bound in partnership for life. And is a girl of sixteen a proper judge of the qualities necessary for such an union?"—"But, if I mistake not," returned my friend, "the age of Mr. Darnley very nearly doubles that of my sister." "True," replied the old Gentleman; "but Mr. Darnley does not marry Emma merely on account of her pretty face. Neither does she bestow her affections on his fortune. The tender friendship that already subsists between them, is cemented

by esteem for real virtues.—If it had been otherwise, it is not Mr. Darnley's fortune (though far beyond what a child of mine is by any means entitled to) that should have tempted me to witness the sacrifice of her future peace."

Here the good Gentleman was interrupted by the entrance of this very Mr. Darnley who had come to pay his compliments to the family, on the arrival of my friend. His noble aspect and graceful manner, apparently justified all that had been said in his favour; and the sweet blushes that spread themselves over the countenance of the fair maiden, on unexpectedly beholding him—told, that the old Gentleman had not been wrong in his conjectures, concerning the state of her heart.

But what does Maandaara think of the doctrine of Mr. Denbeigh? Not suffer a daughter to enter into an engagement of marriage before she is twenty!—Twenty!—why twenty is old enough for a grandmother!—I fear the reasonings of Mr. Den-

beigh would make as few converts in Hindostan, as in the English seminaries, where young Ladies are *genteelly educated.*

We have just returned from spending the day with the eldest daughter of Mr. Denbeigh.

The company assembled were numerous and gay, and the entertainment given them by the Merchant, was at once substantial and splendid.—I should not, however, have thought of mentioning it, but for the sake of one of the guests, whose behaviour will give you some idea of the manners and conversation of such *people of style* as are suffered to go abroad after the loss of their senses.—When such people visit, they make use of the company as their *Chubdars*;* and al-

* The servant whose business it is to proclaim the titles.

ways keep them waiting for their appearance such a length of time, as may give them sufficient opportunity for discussing their birth, titles, and situation. This Lady was accordingly announced, before her appearance, to be the wife of a recruiting officer, and fifteenth cousin to an Irish Lord—a circumstance, of which we might have remained in ignorance, had she arrived at the same time with the rest of the company.

When she entered, the height of the chowry that adorned her head; the length of the train of silk which followed her into the room, and which did not disdain to wipe the feet of the gentlemen; the scanty size of the veil of modesty, which covered, or rather which did not cover, her bosom; the quickness of her step, the undaunted assurance of her mein—all spoke the consciousness of her own superiority. I listened to her conversation with the most respectful attention, till she mentioned a circumstance, that at once struck me with astonishment and horrour. "London," she said, was now

become quite a desert, nor a single being remained in town." "London!" repeated I. "London! that populous city, which was late the residence of so many hundred thousand people; is it possible, that it can so suddenly have been rendered desolate?" "Lard bless me," returned the Lady, "every body knows that there is not at this time a single creature in London: and so I told the Captain before we went, but he would go, and staid ten whole days; you never knew any thing so horrid! Not one creature was to be seen."

"Horrid, indeed," repeated I, "Alas! poor Doctor Severan, what, in the general calamity, is become of him?" A smile which sat upon the faces of the company, and a look of compassion with which the benevolent Mr. Denbeigh at that moment seemed to regard my informer, made me suspect her of insanity, and she, indeed, said enough afterwards fully to confirm my suspicion.

Poor thing! she was so incapable of concealing her misfortune—that she seemed to pique herself on having fainted at the sight of a red gown in the month of July, a convincing proof that she was not then in the possession of her understanding.—The derangement of her faculties, may, perhaps, be accounted for from the many *frights* and *shocks* she has met with in a country town, where her husband is unfortunately quartered.

"The *frights*," she said, "came to visit her and some of their heads were so *hideous*, that she thought she would have died at the sight." No wonder that such a circumstance should have produced fatal effects upon a feeble mind. Like most people who labour under this sort of delirium, she was altogether unconscious of her unhappy situation, and really seemed to enjoy a fancied pre-eminence over the daughters of Mr. Denbeigh, and many other females of sound mind, who were assembled upon this occasion. "Alas! poor lady," said I to myself,

" how pitiable is thy situation! How much more would it have been to thy advantage, to have possessed one grain of the good sense of these amiable females, whom thy folly holds in such derision, than to have been cousin to all the Lords in Christendom! Had not thy malady brought blindness to thine eyes, thou mightest, doubtless, have beheld in the streets of London, thousands, and ten thousands of thy superiours in the scale of human excellence!"—But thus it is, that the dust of folly which is shaken into the eyes by the hand of affectation, produces the false perception of objects.

May we have our eyes enlightened by the * Collyrium of judgment—so shall we be able to observe ourselves in the Mirror of Truth!

* Collyrium. Crude Antimony, and sometimes Lead ore, ground to an inpalpable powder, which the people of India put into there eyes, bv means of a polished wire. They fancy it clears the sight, and encreases the lustre of the eye.

I HAVE had the unexpected satisfaction of beholding the sister of my first English friend. Yes, Maandaara, Charlotte Percy is now the guest of Mr. Denbeigh, and you may judge how much such a circumstance has augmented the pleasure of Zaarmilla.

I did not till lately discover, that Morley-farm was in the neighbourhood of Violet-dale, and not many hours elapsed after the discovery, till, in company with Denbeigh and his sister Emma, I went to visit the late residence of the benevolent old man, whose character is still spoken of in this neighbourhood in terms of respect, gratitude, and affection. The weather was serene and temperate, such as, at Almora, we frequently enjoy in the depth of winter; it was what is here called a fine autumnal morning. The trees, which were so lately clothed in the livery of the Mussulman Prophet, have

now assumed a greater variety of colouring —while some have had their green coats changed into the sober tint of the cinnamon: and others have taken the tawny hue of the orange. The leaves of many, which like ungracious children, had forsaken their parent stem, rustled in our path. Of all the vocal inhabitants of the woods, one little bird alone, like the faithful friend, who reserves his services for the hour of adversity, sitting on the half-striped boughs, raised the soft note of consolation to the deserted grove.

Emma, who was our conductress, said she would take us by the private road, which had been a few years ago made by Mr. Morley and her father, to facilitate the intercourse of their families. We soon arrived where the wooden bridge had stood; but, alas! it was now no longer passable. A few of its planks half floated on the stream —the rest had been carried away by the farmer, to make up a breach in the fence. "Ah!" said Emma, "could poor Mr. Mor-

ley now see that bridge!—but do not mention it to my father. I know how it would vex him to hear of it." We proceeded on another road, and at the distance of a few paces from the house, we met with a second disappointment. Attempting to open a small gate that led to the front door of the house, a little boy came out to tell us that it had been nailed up, that we must go through the yard where the cattle were feeding.

Emma begged we might proceed on farther, and we were about to comply with her request, when the wife of the person who now rents the farm came to us. "Ah! how glad Miss Percy will be to see you Miss!" cried she. "I did not think that my son could have been back from the Dale so soon."

"Miss Percy!" said Emma. "What of Miss Percy? When did you hear of her?"

"Did you not know that she came here yesterday?" returned the woman. "She sent a letter to let you know that she intended going over to the Dale to-night."

"Sent a letter!" returned Emma. "Charlotte used not to be so ceremonious."

"Indeed she is not what she used to be," returned the farmer's wife. "She is so melancholy, that I never saw the like. Soon after she came yesterday evening, she went out to the garden, and, would you believe it? the sight of the potatoes my husband planted in the place my old master used to call his Velvet Walk, and which he used to have mown every week (though the grass was good for nothing, to be sure, but to be swept away as if it had been rubbish) and where he used to sit of an evening in the queer-looking chair, that now, when it is turned upside down, does so well for a hay-rack for the young calves; would you believe it? her eyes filled with tears at the very sight of it. Now what could make any one cry at the sight of a good crop or potatoes, is more than I can imagine. But, says my husband, don't you see that it is being so very lonely that makes Miss so melancholy? So I went to her, and though

she said she liked to be lonely, I would not leave her to herself the whole evening."

"Your company would be a great relief to her spirits, to be sure, said Denbeigh.

"Yes, for certain," returned the good woman; "though she took on a little still. And when she went into the paddock, where the little poney that Mr. Morley used to ride about the farm now runs, La! see Miss, says I, if there is not your uncle's poney, I dare to say it knows you. She held out her hand, and called it by its name, and, would you believe it? it no sooner heard her voice, than it came scampering up.—Poor Mopsy, said she, as she stroaked its ears, and again the tears came into her eyes. She turned away, but the beast still followed her, neighing, till we came to the gate. She then so begged me to leave her for a few minutes, that I went on the other side of the hedge, and saw her go back to poor Mopsy, and laying her hand upon its head, as it held it out for her to stroak—she burst into tears. Dear heart, says I, Miss, don't

take on so; my husband will buy you a surer-footed beast than Mopsy, at any market in the country, for five pounds.

"Poor Charlotte!" said Emma: "but why did she expose herself to this torture?" The good woman stared at Emma, who declined listening to any more of her conversation; but demanding which way her cousin had walked, she hastily requested us to follow.

"How nicely this gravel walk used to be kept!" said Emma (as we walked along) "and see how it is now destroyed. These shrubs too, so broken down by the cattle, how the good old Mr. Morley used to delight himself in taking care of them! He is gone! and, alas! how quickly are the favourite objects of his attention likely to perish!—But the remembrance of his virtues shall not thus fall into oblivion.—No!" continued the lovely Moralist: "the trees he has planted may be cut down by sordid avarice; and the hand of brutish stupidity may root out the flowers of his garden; but

his deeds of benevolence and charity shall be held in everlasting remembrance!"

We were now arrived at the gate of a meadow, which was almost encircled by the stream. A narrow path winded through the plantation of young trees that ornamented its banks.—At the root of one of these trees, I perceived a small bright object glittering in the rays of the sun. I approached it, and found some leaves of ivory, fastened by a silver clasp, which on touching it, flew open, and discovered the hand writing of Miss Percy. "It is Charlotte's tablets," cried Emma. "It was in these she used to sketch the effusions of her fancy, on any subject that occurred.—It is still so," continued she, turning over the leaves. "Here is some poetry—she cannot think it any breach of faith to read it." "Read it then," said her brother.

She complied, and read as follows—

Why, shades of Morley! will you not impart
Some consolation to my grief-worn mind?
'Mid your delightful scenes, my sinking heart
Had hoped the sweets of wonted peace to find.

Dear scenes of sweet content, and careless ease,
Where in unchanging bliss the seasons roll'd,
Where Winter's storm, or Summer's genial breeze,
Could some peculiar beauty still unfold.

The charmer Hope then perch'd on every bough,
And sung of Friendship true, and Love sincere;
While Fancy twin'd her wreath round youth's fair brow,
And Mem'ry's annals mark'd no transient tear.

But now—the charmer Hope is heard no more!
Gone is my youth's lov'd friend;—for ever gone!
The dear delusive dreams of bliss are o'er,
And all fair Fancy's airy train is flown!

Sad Mem'ry now must these lov'd haunts invade
With the dark forms of many a heart-felt grief,
With bosom'd sorrows, silent as this shade.
Sorrows from lenient Time that scorn relief.

As to each well known object Mem'ry clings,
She bids the tear of deep regret to flow;
To every former scene of bliss she brings
The throb of Anguish, and the sigh of Woe.

As she retraces every blissful hour,
Here spent with cheerful Hope, and youthful Joy,
Hope lost! Joy gone for ever;———
* * * * * * * * * * * *

The tears which had fallen on the remaining lines had rendered them totally

illegible. Those which suffused the blue eyes of the gentle Emma, stopt her utterance, she hastily put the tablets in her pocket—and we proceeded in silence.

In a spot that was peculiarly sheltered by a row of beeches, whose leaves have now assumed the colour of the dried cinnamon, stood the remains of an arbour, which had once been covered with the most beautiful creepers this ungenial climate can produce, but which unsupported now fell upon the ground: no bad emblem of the mind of their former mistress, who sat at the entrance of the arbour, on the trunk of a fallen tree. Her countenance wore the traces of melancholy, but the manner in which she received the salutations of my friends, shewed that her heart was still capable of the most animated affection. Me too she received with kindness; though the ideas associated with my appearance gave a perceptible emotion to her already agitated spirits. She made an effort to banish the melancholy ideas which had of late been so familiar to her

mind; and having satisfied Emma as to the reasons that induced her to stop at Morley-farm, she cheerfully acquiesced in her proposal of returning with us to Violet-dale, where she was received with the cordial welcome of sincere affection; and where, in the happiness of her friends, her own sorrows appear to be forgotten.

In this Temple of domestic bliss, the flight of time has been so imperceptible, that a whole week, which has elapsed since I laid down my pen, appears but as a day.

We know that one of the fourteen precious things which were produced in the churning of the ocean, was a learned physician: but which of the sages of the tribe of Vaidya ever contrived a remedy of such approved efficacy as the conversion of a faithful and judicious friend?

Such a one has Miss Percy experienced in the father of Denbeigh. He has already convinced her that the indulgence of melancholy, instead of being an amiable weakness, rather deserving of admiration than censure, is, in reality, equally selfish and sinful.—It is, he says, the height of ingratitude to the Giver of all good, peevishly to refuse the enjoyment of the many blessings that are left us, because we are deprived of a few, which were in their very natures perishable.—"But, alas!" replied Miss Percy, "what is left to those whose earliest and dearest friends have been snatched from them by the hand of death?"

"Much is left to all," replied Mr. Denbeigh. "No one, who enjoys the blessings of health, and a peaceful conscience, can, without ingratitude, repine. The proper discharge of the duties of life is a source of happiness to every well regulated mind."

"But how circumscribed are the limits of those duties to a female, who has no longer any parent to attend on: no family to

manage: no fortune to bestow in deeds of charity: and who has it little in her power to be useful, even to a friend?"

"And is the gift of reason then nothing?" retorted Mr. Denbeigh. "And are the powers of the mind to lie dormant, because, forsooth, you have not now the management of a family: or the exercise of the benevolent affections to be given up, because you have not a fortune to build alms-houses? These are the mere subterfuges of indolence. Believe me, my dear Charlotte, that whoever seriously resolves not to suffer any opportunity of benefiting a fellow-creature to pass unemployed, will find, that the power of doing good is not circumscribed within very narrow limits.

"Why, (let me ask you farther) should your mind, cultivated as it has been by education, and improved by listening to the conversation of the enlightened and judicious! why should it not exert its powers, not only for your own entertainment, but for

the instruction, or innocent amusement of others?"

"Ah! Sir," returned Charlotte, "you know how female writers are looked down upon. The women fear, and hate; the men ridicule, and dislike them."

"This may be the case with the mere mob, who receive every prejudice upon trust," rejoined Mr. Denbeigh; "but if the simplicity of your character remains unchanged—if the virtues of your heart receive no alloy from the vanity of authorship; trust me, my dear Charlotte, you will not be the less dear to any friend that is deserving of your love, for having employed your leisure hours in a way that is both innocent and rational."

Thus did this venerable old man persuade Miss Percy to reconcile her mind to the evils of her destiny, and, by the exertion of activity, to seek the road to contentment. Nor has his attention been confined to her. Me also, he has honoured with much of his instructive conversation. He has been par-

ticularly solicitous to know my opinions concerning all that I have seen in England; and expecting to reap advantage from his observations, I have put into his hands a copy of all my letters to you. These it was easy for me to give in English; it having been my custom to write down such conversations as I intended to recite to you, in that language, and after having given it to some English friend to translate, have from the corrected copy made the translations intended for your use.

Mr. Denbeigh was much entertained with my account of the philosophers, but said, "if it was known in England, people would think that I intended to turn philosophy itself into ridicule." Thus it is that the designs of authors are mistaken! Perhaps this is not the only passage in my letters that might, to an English reader, appear to be absurd.—Happily they will never be exposed to any eye, save that of my friend.—It is therefore sufficient, if to him they convey

a picture of the truth, such as it appears to the mind of Zaarmilla.

I have already hinted my astonishment at the number of new books that are every year produced in England; but now that I know what these books have to encounter, before they fight their way into the world, my astonishment is increased tenfold! Many and various are the evils which these poor adventurers have to encounter. Besides the smarting, though superficial wounds, which they may expect to receive from the small-shot of the ladies and gentlemen *genteelly educated*, who call every thing *stupid* that is beyond the limits of their slender comprehensions, they have to sustain the *heavy* blows of those who cut down every thing as *nonsense*, that swerves from the beaten track over which they have been accustomed to trot. Should they be endowed with sufficient strength to survive the attack of both these adversaries, they have still to pass before the formidable phalanx of Reviewers, each of whom, like the mighty

Carticeya,* brandishes in his hundred arms a hundred instruments of destruction. These terrible Genii are said to judge of books by the smell, and when that has happened to be offensive to their nostrils, have been known, by one well-aimed dart, to transfix an unfortunate book to the shelves of the booksellers' shops for ever. But with the powerful is found mercy. Instead of the dread weapons of war, these imitators of the sons of the Mountain-born Goddess, sometimes condescend gently to tickle the trembling adventurer with a feather plucked from the plumage of the Peacock.

Ah! if ever friend of Zaarmilla's venture to send forth a book into the world, may it find these terrible Reviewers in this favourable mood! May its perfume be pleas-

* The Hindoo God of War. He is represented with six faces, and a number of hands, in each of which he brandishes a weapon. He rides upon a peacock, and is usually found in company with his Mother Parvati, or the Mountain Goddess, one of the characters of the consort of Seeva. See Asiatick Researches, vol, ii.

ing to their nostrils, and its form find favour in their sight!!

I HAVE just received a letter from my friend Severan, it contains the desirable information, that a ship will in a few weeks sail for India—the commander of which, is his particular friend. In it I shall take my passage—and if the powerful Varuna is favourable to my prayers, shall, in the progress of a few returning moons, again behold the blessed shores of Hindostan. O thought replete with extacy! How does the bosom of Zaarmilla pant for the period of thy realization!—Yet shall I not purchase that felicity, without having paid the debt of anguish, in many a tear; before my eyes can be solaced by beholding the companions of my youth, they must have been moistened with the sorrow of an eternal separation from every English friend.

From this amiable family, from the worthy Denbeigh, and the excellent Severan, I shall have been parted for ever.—But the remembrance of their virtues shall be the companion of my life; and the idea of their happiness shall solace every hour of my existence.

Nothing can equal the delight of my friend Severan, at the success of his experiment; which has opened a new field for discovery, of which he will not be slow to take possession. It is a peculiar advantage attendant upon science, that the gratification it affords is not more delightful to the individual, than beneficial to society; and it is this consideration that enhances every enjoyment of the scientifick philosopher.

I cannot help thinking, that this sort of philosophy is more favourable to the happiness of its votaries, than that sort professed at Ardent-Hall; but this may be owing to the advantages enjoyed by the former, of a happier method of conducting their experiments. It certainly does not arise in the

latter from any want of zeal, or from a backwardness to repeat experiments, that have already been found unsuccessful. As a proof of this, my friend Severan informs me, that Mr. Axiom has persuaded Miss Ardent to accompany him to the Continent, on an experiment of *abstract principle*, which, he says—"should put a learned female above the censure of the world." My friend seems to doubt whether the result of this experiment, will bring peace to the poor Lady's bosom; and adds, "that it would be no less surprising, to see the flame of the taper brighten, on being plunged into mephitick air, than that a female, who bids defiance to modesty and decorum should preserve her honour and her peace."

Miss Ardent has resigned her charge of the younger daughter of Sir Caprice, to Lady Grey. The eldest daughter of the Baronet, the Novel-reading Julia, has, it seems, suffered much from the unexpected metamorphosis of a charming swain; who, soon after he had introduced himself to her

acquaintance, as a hero of exalted sentiment and tender sensibility, was unfortunately recognized by certain sagacious men, from a place called Bow-street, to be one of the tribe of Swindlers—the discovery gave such a shock to the nerves of the young Lady, that she has been ordered to a place called Bath, for the recovery of her health. Thither her father and mother have accompanied her; and there the former, at the instigation of a teacher of a sect called Methodists, has renounced the poojah of System; and, instead of building a house for sparrows to make honey, he now intends to erect a church, for the edification of the saints. Thus doth one folly succeed to another, in the breast of him who is void of all permanent principle!—May the mind of Maandaara be furnished by Ganesa with the protecting shield of judgment, and preserved from the evils of instability!

As this letter will be sent by a small vessel called a Packet, which carries dispatches from this government to the council of Calcutta, it will probably reach the happy region of Almora some weeks before thy friend.

I anticipate the comments which thou wilt make upon its contents. Thou wilt observe, that to extend our knowledge of the world, is but to become acquainted with new modes of pride, vanity, and folly. Thou wilt perceive that in Europe, as in Asia, an affected singularity often passes for superiour wisdom; bold assertion for truth; and sickly fastidiousness for true delicacy of sentiment. Thou wilt see that the passions of men are every where the same; and that the variety made by the Idol of Doctor Sceptick (existing circumstances) is not in the passions themselves, but in the complexion of the objects which excite them. Thou wilt remark, that though vice and folly have the appearance of being every where predominant, that it is only the

superficial observer, who will from thence infer the non-existence of Wisdom and Virtue. These have been traced by Maandaara to the bosom of retirement, where he will have observed them employed in scattering the sweet blossoms of domestick peace: and though the torch of vanity glares not on their dwelling, and the trump of fame sounds not at their approach, he will nevertheless have remarked with pleasure the extent of their silent reign, and, with Zaarmilla, will pity the man who can form a doubt of their existence.

Of the various religions of the English, I have given you a full and distinct account. You will perceive by it, that notwithstanding the progress of philosophy, and the report of Sheermaal, that that of Christianity is not *yet entirely extinct;* but that, like Virtue and Wisdom, it has still some adherents, in the retired scenes of life.—You will, perhaps, not have been able to discover how the practices enjoined by its precepts can be injurious to society; and inclined to

think, that the love of a Being of infinite wisdom and goodness, and such a government of the passions, as enables a man to love his neighbour as himself, can do no great harm to the world.—Obnoxious as the precepts which command purity of heart, unfeigned humility, sanctity of morals, and simplicity of manners, may be to the philosopher; you will conclude, that they have, in reality, been found as little detrimental to the repose of the individual, as the expectation of everlasting felicity has been to his happiness. I am sorry, that the want of success attending the experiments of the worshippers of System, presents me with nothing to oppose to your conclusions better than assertion: but if you have the complaisance of the people of England, you will think that ought to be sufficient to overturn the dictates of common sense; though confirmed by the experience of ages!—Such faith do these good people put in the assertions of philosophers!

I am called from my pen to witness a ceremony called Signing the Settlements,

which is preliminary to the marriage of Mr. Darnley and the blooming Emma. The day after to-morrow is fixed for their nuptials, and on the day following, the amiable bride departs with her husband, loaded with paternal blessings. Though every thing is to be conducted in common form, and exactly in conformity to Christian prejudices, I do not know but this gentle and unassuming girl may have as great a chance for happiness, as if she had gone off with her lover on an experiment of *abstract principle.*

"May the conduct of those who act well, afford pleasure to the mind!—May you, ye good, find friends in this world! May virtue be for ever to be found!"

In reading the letters of a friend, may the goodness of his intention be put in the balance with his errours; and where the former is found predominant, may the latter be consigned to oblivion!

What can I say more?

FINIS.

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